

SNAPS

A COMIC WEEKLY OF COMIC STORIES BY COMIC AUTHORS.

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No. 25.

NEW YORK, MARCH 28, 1900.

Price 5 Cents.

TOMMY BOUNCE, JR.; OR A CHIP OF THE OLD BLOCK. BY PETER PAD.



Tommy related his experience. "So, so; the boys have been hazing you. I understand it," said Lamb, while Hop Ski grinned all over the front side of his head. "Muche fun. Bully boys," said he. "Is that the way they work a fresh?" asked Tommy, after a moment's reflection.

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TOMMY BOUNCE, JR.;

OR,

A CHIP OF THE OLD BLOCK.

BY PETER PAD.

CHAPTER I.

Friends of Peter Pad!

Do you remember the adventures of Tommy Bounce?

Of course you do.

Many a laugh have you had over Tommy and his capers.

The record of his career began with the first number of "Snaps," and in spite of the many interesting things you have seen in it since then, in spite of the many laughs you have enjoyed, you remember Tommy Bounce.

All right.

Well, Tommy got married, and settled down to a sober, steady-going business man, and a solid member of society. He forgot or put away all boyish capers, became a solid man, with a solid bank account, having succeeded his uncle in business, and in due course of time found himself the father of a splendid, bouncing boy, and he at once had him christened Thomas Bounce, Jr.

The young one grew in years, and the father grew more and more mature, until a person would hardly have suspected that he had ever been the wag the reader knows him to have been.

But as the child grew in strength and stature, those who had known the father in his younger days said, without hesitation, that he was undoubtedly a chip of the old block, which caused the proud father to smile, but to think seriously within himself sometimes whether the kid would grow up so full of the "old white horse" as he had been, or not.

But he thought of it only once in a while, for his mind was full of business, and so little Tommy grew to be quite a lad before his father's attention was called to him particularly.

And his attention was called to him at first by a complaint of a colored servant who had the charge of him (or was supposed to have), a man by the name of Ebenezer Crow, who, besides being the family coachman, was required to look after little Tommy, and see that he did not get into mischief.

Ebenezer found his hands full in attending to his regular duties and looking after young Tommy Bounce, as well as his own little kid, for the greatest amusement Tommy appeared to have was fighting with little George Washington Abraham Lincoln, Ebenezer's first-born and only one.

And it was Ebenezer who first called his father's attention to the precocious deviltry of little Tommy, and the impossibility of his doing anything with him.

"Massa Bounce, I don' can't do nuffin wid dat boy," said he, with a sigh one day.

"What is that you say, Ebenezer, you can't do anything with him?"

"No, sah."

"Can't you at least keep him out of mischief?" asked Mr. Bounce seriously.

"Massa Bounce, I tolle yer dat yer may jus' as well try fo' ter keep a cat 'way from cream as dat boy 'way from mischief. I don't want ter hurt yer feelinks, sah, fo' I's a farder myself, but dat boy hab got mo' mischief and square deviltry in him den a tame coon."

"Why, what does he do?"

"Massa Bounce, I don't want fo' ter harm your feelinks, fo' I's a farder myself, but if you will tell me somefin' dat he don't do, I frow up de allegations."

"But what particular grievance have you?"

"He in de stable wid dat kid ob mine, an' take a stick an' make der horses kick up to see if dey won't knock little George Washington Abraham Lincoln's head off with der hoofs, an' he is in de kitchen tippin' ober things and raisin' de debil wid my wife, an' den he go all ober de house into all sorts ob mischief, takin' little George Washington Abraham Lincoln 'long wid him, an' I's awful 'fraid dat he spile him fo' good."

"Spoil him for good? Why, what do you mean?"

"Well, make him jus' as bad as he is."

"Why, a child of his age cannot be so bad, I am certain," said Mr. Bounce.

"Don't seem so, Massa Bounce, but I will say fo' de Lord, dat I neber seen nuffin' dat could hole a candle to him for all sorts of mischief. What you fink he do de oder day?"

"I am sure I cannot tell."

"You know de ole gray cat?"

"Certainly."

"An' you know de pet Guinea pig?"

"Yes."

"Well, what you 'spect he do?"

"How should I know, unless you tell me?"

"Well, I tolle you what he do. He got a stout string an' he tie de hin' leg ob dat cat to de hin' leg ob dat Guinea pig, an' den he let 'em go."

"And didn't they go?" asked Mr. Bounce, while a smile stole over his face.

"Did dey go! Ax eberybody dat libs on dis yer block if dey didn't go. Upstairs an' downstairs—fightin', growlin' and a-squealin', thumpin' an' a-bumpin', frightenin' eberybody in de house out ob der five senses, and he a-runnin' after dem, followed by my boy, George Washington Abraham Lincoln, shoutin', laughin' an' yellin' like a little Injun. An' finally dey got out inter de back yard an' raise such a rumpus dat ebery dog on de block was a-barkin', ebery cat a-yeowin' an' eberybody lookin' out obe de back windows an' shoutin' fo' de police. How dat?"

Mr. Bounce straightened his face out the best he could, and said that such things were very wrong, and that he would surely have to correct Tommy for it.

"An' what you 'spect he do de odder day?"

"I of course cannot even guess."

"I tolle you what he do, sah, I tolle you. I war only jus' comin' home wid de coach, after drivin' Mrs. Bounce an' her mudder out for some shoppin', when I found dat Tommy an' George Washington Abraham Lincoln had built a fire in de middle ob de carriage-house, an' war a-tryin' ter make 'lasses candy by boilin' 'lasses in an ole tomato can. How's dat? Right on de stable floor!"

"That was certainly very wrong, and I shall call him severely to an account for such mischief," said Mr. Bounce.

"Well, I make him stop dat 'bout as quick as you break up a hen's nest, but what you fink he do den?"

"I cannot even guess."

"Well, I tolle ye what he do. I take off my libery hat, wid de fancy cockade on it, an' put it away in de closet in de stable whar I allus keep it. Well, while I warn't lookin' dat little—'scuse me, Massa Bounce, for I's a farder myself—dat little—little—"

"Master Bounce?"

"Yes, he takes dat 'lasses an' pour it all inter my hat."

Mr. Bounce turned away to laugh without being observed.

"Yes, sah. An' de day ahead ob yesterday I got all ready ter drive de ladies out, and put on dat hat. De 'lasses were kinder cold an' stiff like, an' I didn't notice it, but put de hat on my head an' go out wid de team jus' de same as I allus do. But bimeby dat 'lasses kinder get warm up an' begin ter run inter my wool, an' down on my face, an' down my neck, an' inter my eyes, while I were on Fifth avenue. An' eberybody laugh an' yell at me, an' ask me who had been givin' me taffy, an' what I carried it in my hat fo'."

Mr. Bounce laughed right out, and most heartily, at this, for there was no use of trying to keep it in. He remembered his own youthful pranks, and before he was aware of it, and while for the moment forgetting that he was a father, he actually applauded the "taffy" trick, and regretted that he had not been a witness to it.

"Massa Bounce, I never war so mad an' shamed in my life."

"I don't wonder at it, Ebenezer."

"Now what do I do? How I keep my eye on a chile like he? I tolle you, sah, he got de best ob me all de time."

"Never mind; I will take the young man in hand and prune him up a little. I have been too neglectful of him," said Mr. Bounce, turning away, and going in search of his young hopeful.

"Prune him! By golly, I fink that he will hab ter graft him close down to de groun' an' den kill de graft afo' he will make anything ob him. But I mus' look out fo' my George Washington Abraham Lincoln, or he will clamtaminate him so dat dar will be no livin' wid him. Dat Tommy am sho' ter make a wuss boy den Dick Plunket is, an' I jes' wants ter be libin' somewhar else when dat comes about," he muttered, going to the kitchen to look after his own black hopeful. "If I catch him up to any ob dem tricks, I'll spank de butt end all off ob him."

"Tommy, come here," said Mr. Bounce, about five minutes after his conversation with his coachman, Ebenezer.

The little fellow started up from his work of tying two kites together by the tails, and came forward looking as honest as a new cheese.

"Got something for me, pop?" he asked.

"Yes, I think I have got something for you," replied his father, looking serious.

"All right. Shell out—come down!"

"What?"

"Pan out; show up!"

"What?" again exclaimed his father, almost paralyzed at the cheek and slang of his first and only born.

"Dump!"

"I'll dump you over my knee, you little heathen, if I hear any more such slang out of your head."

"Well, didn't you say you had something for me?" asked Tommy, a little more quiet.

"Yes, sir. I have something for you. Do you wish to know what it is?"

"Yes. Show up!"

"I have got a good, sound flogging for you if I hear any more about your tricks and pranks about the house. Understand?"

"I don't tumble, dad," said Tommy, looking as serious as ever.

"Tumble! Where did you get that word?"

"Oh, I don't know."

"Well, I find that you are getting to be a very bad boy, and Ebenezer tells me that you give him a great deal of trouble, and I want to tell you that if I hear of any more of your mischievous pranks, I shall take you over my knee and warm you until you howl. Understand?" and then he repeated to himself: "Spare the rod, spoil the child."

"I didn't do nuffin."

"What! How about building a fire in the stable? How about pouring molasses into Ebenezer's hat?"

The little rascal laughed, and his father turned away to do the same thing, although he took good care not to let Tommy see him.

"Did the coon say that?"

"The coon!"

"Did he give me away?"

"Come here, you little rascal!" and Mr. Bounce snatched that little "tough" of his and landed him belly down upon his lap.

And then he went for his uppermost and most bulbous part with the flat of his hand, causing Tommy to howl and beg for mercy.

Tommy looked somewhat sad-eyed the next morning when he came to breakfast, and his father and mother had on their severest faces, to convince him that he had been a very bad boy, and that if he did not instantly reform, he would get skinned like an eel.

But he soon forgot the warning, and Mr. Bounce, as he went to business, could but smile and remember how very like his son he was at the same age; how truly the boy was a chip of the old block.

Tommy, although feeling as though he had much rather stand than sit down, still remembered that it was the coachman, Ebenezer Crow, who had given him away to his daddy, and his one immediate object was to get hunk on him; but how to do it he hardly knew.

But that afternoon, while Eben was cleaning off one of the horses, Tommy stationed himself near at hand with a "bean-blower." Every boy knows how they work, and so there is no occasion to explain them.

Ebenezer was dressed in his "duster," and was working away around the legs and heels of a spirited horse, when Tommy blew a bean with all his force, and struck the animal near the eye, causing him to jump and prance around at a lively rate.

"Whoa, dar! What's der matter wid yer, hey? Want ter step all ober my foots?" he yelled, slapping the horse with a currycomb. "Feel mighty nice, don't yer?"

At that moment Tommy shot off another bean, and this time hit the horse squarely in the eye, causing him to kick up and knock Ebenezer sprawling.

"Whoa—whoa—whoa!" he groaned, as he gathered himself up again. "Wha—wha de matter wid yer? Whoa! Keep down dem heels. Wanter kill der bes' coachman in New York? Don't yer shake yer head at me. I ain't done nuffin' agin yer. Whoa, Billy, whoa. What's der matter?"

Tommy was watching affairs through a knothole in a partition, through which he aimed his bean-blower, and after Ebenezer got fairly at work again, he sent in another bean with all his might, causing the horse to kick and stamp around wildly.

"Whoa, I say! What's der matter wid yer? Drefful ticklish ter-day, ain't yer? Whoa, or I break five or six ob yer ribs, shuah!"

And so the little rascal kept at it until he had worried the horse nearly crazy, when Eben happened to discover one of the beans he had blown at the horse; that is to say, he had observed it when it hit the animal and then fell to the floor.

In an instant a new light broke in upon him, and he knew that all his sorrow was traceable to but one cause—Tommy Bounce.

And so he made a rush to get behind the partition, hoping to catch Tommy in the act. But that wide-awake little hopeful was out of the way long before he got around, and he was so puzzled that he hardly knew whether the beans rained down or not.

But his own kid, George Washington Abraham Lincoln, gave Tommy away and told his daddy all about the racket, and once more Ebenezer had his back up, and his mind made up to tell Mr. Bounce all about it.

That night, however, little Tommy got in on the little coon to get square on him for blabbing, and gave him an awful drubbing.

This of course brought Ebenezer to the front, and for a while things looked decidedly squally, but through the kind offices of old Granny Bounce, the matter was quieted and the children put into their respective beds.

But still Tommy had it in for that little coon, and resolved to get square some time.

The next evening they were playing together in the dining-room—that is to say, Tommy was playing with the little darkey, and they were to all appearances having a good time. Ebenezer Crow was watching them with a broad grin over-spreading his fat mug, and finally he got the little fellow to dancing for the amusement of the family.

"Tommy can't dance," said he, after he had received the applause of the company.

"Can't! Well, I can put a head on you if I can't dance," said Tommy.

This rather pleased his father, who at once proposed that they should both get upon the table and have a wrestling match, although the ladies were greatly opposed to it.

But Tommy was ready for it, and in a few moments they

were upon the table, while their parents gathered round to see the sport.

But little George W. A. L. didn't appear to want to wrestle, he wanted to dance.

"Bah! yer no good, coony. I'll tell yer what I'll do: I'll run yer a foot-race here on the table," said Tommy.

But the little darkey wouldn't have it, and began to dance a breakdown upon the dining-room table, doing it so well that his father felt so proud that he wouldn't have swapped him for a new red wheelbarrow.

"No good!" shouted Tommy, and at the same time seizing the little coon by the wool, he began to kick his shins smartly.

"There's a step yer don't know, coony," said he, while the little darkey yelled like a stuck pig, causing everybody in the room to laugh, with the exception of Ebenezer Crow and his wife.

"Hole on dar!" yelled Eben.

"Leave 'lone dat dar boy!" added the mother.

"Go it!" shouted Mr. Bounce, forgetting himself for the moment. "Go it, you little rascal!"

"Why, Thomas!" exclaimed Mrs. Bounce. "The idea—you a husband and father."

"Well, let 'em have it out, now they are at it, for I have noticed that the little coon puts on airs now and then, and it is just as well that he should find out who his master is."

"Why, Thomas, I am astonished," said his mother, holding up her hands in horror. "That is not the way I brought you up."

"No, mother, but I managed to come up that way myself. Hold on there, Tommy, what are you doing, you young rascal?" he added, suddenly remembering himself.

The fight came to a sudden termination, and the black and white kids turned to their respective daddies.

"George Washington Abraham Lincoln, what you do dar? Stop dat yellin', or I'll bust yer in de snoot!" said Ebenezer, snatching his crying kid from the table.

"Come here, you young vagabond; how dare you fight in my very presence?" said Mr. Bounce, seizing his hopeful and rushing him from the dining-room into the parlor. "How dare you? Have I not always taught you to be a good boy and not fight? Now, you go to bed."

Poor Tommy! He obeyed orders, and still he was uncertain whether his father was his friend or his enemy. But he concluded that he had got in all of his fine work on that little coon, and so he went to sleep satisfied and happy.

As for Mr. Bounce, he deeply regretted his momentary forgetfulness, and resolved from that time forth to draw the reins closer and bring up his child in the way he should go.

"He is getting old enough now, and we must send him to school," said he to his wife afterward.

And so it was agreed to curb his deviltry by sending him to the public school, that the teachers might have a chance to share in his bounding effervescence.

"That's all right," said Tommy, when apprised of the new departure for his benefit; "but I'm going to have some fun, in school or out of school, and dad needn't forget it."

CHAPTER II

So Mr. Bounce sent Tommy to one of the public schools, hoping to take his mind off of mischief and start him on the high road of learning, although he could not forget his own experience at school, and how little its influences tended to make him the solid man he now was.

Going to school for the first time in his life was of course a novelty to Tommy Bounce, Jr., as it is to any boy. But the novelty soon wore off, and deviltry took the place of it.

There wasn't a thing that he wasn't into in the shape of mischief, and as often as every other day he was either punished or sent home to report himself to his parents.

"Tommy, have you been a bad boy again to-day?" his mother would ask, when she saw him return home before time.

"No, ma'am," he was sure to say.

"Then why are you home at this time?"

"Because—"

"Well, because of what?"

"Why, the teacher said she didn't think I looked well, and sent me home for some medicine."

"What a story! I think she has the very medicine you must need."

"Rattan Syrup?" he asked, with a grin.

"Yes, and I shall write her a note, and tell her to give you frequent doses of it, just remember that."

"All right, mammy, lemme carry the note to her?"

His mother looked in surprise at the grinning little rascal; and then, unable to keep her face straight any longer, she turned away and left Tommy to finish his grin, dance a little breakdown, and then go for the colored coachman's kid, little George Washington Abraham Lincoln Crow, whom he always fell back upon when he couldn't have fun with anything else.

This was the greatest torment of Ebenezer's life, for Tommy appeared to think because the little fellow was black that he was made of india rubber, and could be knocked around any way he liked without hurting him.

So he went for the little coon, and after asking him if he wanted to ride, he got him shut up in the dumb waiter and pulled him close up to the roof of the house, and fastened the rope in such a way as to prevent him from coming down again, after which he tried to hunt up some other mischief.

"Tommy, whar am little George Washington Abraham Lincoln?" asked the cook, the kid's mother, seeing that they were not together.

"Give it up, ole gal," was all the satisfaction she got out of Tommy.

"Ebenezer!" she called, going out and looking toward the stable, where her husband was supposed to be at work.

"What am it, honey?"

"Am George Washington Abraham Lincoln out dar?"

"No. Why?"

"'Cos I can't find him nowheres."

Meantime the little kid was yelling three or four kinds of bloody murder away up in the top of the house, where nobody could hear him with the exception of those on the top floors.

Ebenezer went into the kitchen, and at once began to make inquiries regarding his son and heir, but of course nobody knew anything about him.

"Tommy Bounce, jus' you look me in de face," said he finally, and turning savagely upon the little rascal.

"All right. What's the row?"

"Thomas Bounce, whar am little George Washington Abraham Lincoln?"

"How should I know—what's the matter with you—off yer nut?" said he saucily.

"Thomas Bounce, don't you 'waricate wid me. Whar am dat boy?"

"Up in a balloon, I guess."

"Thomas Bounce, I shall shuly tote you farder 'bout dis yer."

"Better find out about it first."

At that moment there was a ringing of bells and a whistling through speaking-tubes, for the folks upstairs had discovered that the mysterious crying came from the dumb waiter.

Ebenezer rushed to the tube and whistled back, after which he placed his ear over the mouth piece to hear what was wanted.

Tommy had only a moment before put some white paint on the mouth piece, which Ebenezer failed to notice, and so he had a white ring around his big mouth and one of his ears, causing him to look comical enough to make a clothes-horse laugh.

"Come upstairs instantly!" was the command yelled through the tube.

"Lor' bress my soul! what am de matter now?" he exclaimed, as he shot out of the room like a charcoal mark, while Tommy thought he would go out into the street and stay a little while.

After a deal of trouble, the poor little coon was liberated, and told how Tommy had given him a ride, which of course created a slight sensation, to say nothing of Eben's mouth and ear.

"Mrs. Bounce, I hope dat you won't lay nuffin' up again me, fo' I se a farder myself, but dat Tommy am a drufful bad boy," said Ebenezer.

"I am forced to admit it. Send him to me at once," said Mrs. Bounce.

Ebenezer took his kid and went down into the kitchen, where he had left Tommy a moment before, feeling a trifle better than he otherwise would have done had he not believed that Tommy would get a basting.

But of course he was not there, and nowhere to be found.

"Pooty lucky fo' him dat he ain't heah!" he muttered, after telling his wife all about it.

"Ebenezer, I won't stay heah no mo' if dat boy don't stop foolin' wid our George Washington Abraham Lincoln," said she.

"No mo' will I, honey. Dis yer nonsense hab got to stop, or I break ebery bone in his body," replied Ebenezer wrathfully.

"Somehow you allus get inter a family whar dar am mischievous boys. Dar war dat Dick Plunket."

"Yes, he war a bad one."

"An' dis yer Tommy Bounce am a gwine ter be as bad; see 'f he don't."

"I's gwine ter tell his farder 'bout him de moment he come home."

"What good dat do? He only laugh. I hearn Granny Bounce tell him de odder day dat Tommy war a chip ob de old block, an' dat make him laugh some mo'."

"Oh, I bet dat he whale him fo' dis," replied Ebenezer, going out to the stable again.

"Now, George Washington Abraham Lincoln, don't yer let me catch yer playin' any mo' wid dat boy, or I skin yer. Hear dat?" said his mother.

Yes, he heard it, but somehow he was never happier than when Tommy was around, even though he bounced him around and had lots of fun with him.

But Tommy kept out of the way until he saw his father coming home from the store, when he ran and took hold of his hand, and told him what a good boy he had been during the day.

But his father soon got a correct report of how good he had been, and then he took him up into the attic and talked to him with a leather strap, after which he left him there to go without his supper.

After all, Mr. Bounce could hardly keep from laughing, knowing so well that he would have probably done the same thing himself at the boy's age. But, nevertheless, he felt it to be his duty as a parent to do his best to whale some of the deviltry out of him, and from that time forth he made it a practice to give him a flogging whenever he could find out that the teacher had done the same thing.

This toned him down somewhat, although Ebenezer swore that he had even more deviltry at home than ever before, and threatened numberless times to leave Mr. Bounce's employ.

But he never did; for after he got over being mad, Tommy was sure to do something to put him in good humor again.

Well, finally the hot weather came on, and preparations were made for going into the country. After talking the matter over for a few days, it was finally agreed to spend the season at Mr. Bounce's old homestead, situated in a pleasant Connecticut village, and that he would visit them once or twice a week.

And in order to "go the whole animal" they concluded to take the cook and coachman along, leaving the city mansion in charge of the housekeeper and servants.

The idea tickled Tommy until he seized George W. A. L. Crow and stood him on his head, and tried to mash a potato with him.

In due season they were established in the old farm house, and Tommy saw so much to do that he scarcely knew which to take hold of first.

It so happened, however, that he took hold of a bee-hive first. Thrusting a long stick into the door of it, he began stirring them up, and then they came out and at once proceeded to stir him and the little coon up with their prickly ends.

It is unnecessary to state that they both took to their heels and howled with pain, which, of course, brought Ebenezer to the spot, and then they went for him. Such a fighting, yelling, and squalling was not often heard in that village, and there was nobody laughing in fun either.

But they finally escaped into the house, leaving the indignant bees triumphant, and ready for somebody else to stir them up.

If you were ever stung by a bee, you know how quickly it swells up, and in less than five minutes there were three of the homeliest and most comical looking people in that house ever seen.

Ebenezer had been stung on one corner of his mouth, and when it began to swell, it began to push his mouth around on one side of his face, while the swelling under one of his eyes closed it completely, and Ebenezer was a beauty.

As for G. W. A. L., he had been stung on the nose and under the chin, the swelling of which caused him to throw his head back so that he could look straight up into the sky, and keep it there, while his nose grew to such enormous proportions that it looked like a big, red beet set up on top of his head.

Tommy was stung in several places, and he didn't feel a bit funny over it, although he stuck to it that the bees attacked him without the least provocation. One of his ears had been tickled by the business end of one of the honey gatherers, and it now looked like an overgrown toadstool, while a big lump on his forehead nearly closed one of his eyes and made his hat ever so much too small for him.

But this wasn't the worst of it; one of them had paid his respects to him on that portion of his body used the most in sitting down, and he was obliged to stand up during the next two days.

They were dreadfully funny to look at, but neither of them found any sport in it worth speaking of. As for Ebenezer, he wasn't well enough acquainted with the bees to know whether they were mad or not, but he knew that he was mad, and so was his wife, when she beheld her handsome kid.

Poultices were in great demand for the next few hours, although it was nearly a week before either of them looked very natural.

But it is safe to bet that Tommy Bounce kept well away from those bee-hives after that, and it was while laid up with his wounds that he coaxed his father into buying him a goat and cart, promising all sorts of good things that he would be and do if he would only get him one.

Well, feeling rather sorry for the pain he had suffered, and thinking that perhaps the goat and cart would not only afford him amusement, but keep him out of mischief, Mr. Bounce was foolish enough to buy him the animal.

He bought him in New York and brought him out the next time he visited home, but he had so much trouble in getting him to the depot and on board the train that he said cuss words enough to load a ship with, and finally had to hire some men to hold him down while he tied his legs, after which he was chucked into the baggage car.

And then, when he arrived at his destination, Tommy was

there to take possession of the goat, as he had planned out any quantity of fun that he would have with it.

But there wasn't so much fun at first as he had calculated on, for that goat was a butter and a savage one. After they had untied his legs and allowed him to get into a natural position once more, the first thing he did, and that without stopping to be introduced, was to back a few steps and go for Ebenezer Crow, striking him squarely on his stern as he was stooped over, and knocking him sprawling over a lot of trunks which stood on the platform.

"Whoa, dar! Stop dat kickin'!" he roared, believing that the horses had kicked him.

This of course created a laugh, Tommy doing the loudest part of it, as the coachman picked himself up and got behind a big trunk.

"Who—who—what's de matter? Who frow dat brick?" he moaned, while trying to collect his scattered senses. He gazed wildly around and rubbed the seat of his pants.

Another loud laugh greeted him from all hands, and Ebenezer looked angry.

"That's my goat, Ebenezer," said Tommy. "He was only shaking hands with you."

"Confoun' yer goat, what he kick me fo'?"

"Wants to get acquainted with you, that's all. Brace up and shake hands with him."

The goat began to prance around as if to get another crack at the darkey, who proceeded to get out of the way.

"Keep him 'way. 'Pears like dat dar war mischief 'nough heah afo' widout dat goat. Guess I frow up my place," he added, as he climbed into his seat on the coach.

"Oh, Tommy will be very careful to teach his goat good manners, won't you, Tommy?"

"Yes, sir," said Tommy smiling.

"That's a good boy."

"Oh, yes, he mighty good boy, he be," muttered Ebenezer, as he drove away.

Tommy attempted to put the harness on his goat for the purpose of riding home from the depot, but after getting buried over five or six times, and the wind nearly knocked out of him, he concluded to lead his harness and wagon along.

But he hadn't enjoyed so much fun since he stirred up the bees as he had in getting that goat from the depot to his house.

But he finally succeeded in getting home, and tied his goat to a tree that stood in front of the house, after which he was glad to sit down and take a rest.

The goat looked around and shook his head, as though not exactly satisfied with his new quarters.

"Oh, I'll fix you all right when I once get you harnessed up. Look out there, nig!" he added, as the little coon got in the reach of the goat, who instantly butted him over into a trough of water.

Then he yelled, and Ebenezer rushed out to see what the trouble was.

"Fo' de Lor', Tommy, I's gwine to murder dat goat," said he.

"I'll bet you won't. Keep yer kid out of his way, then he won't get hurt," said Tommy.

"I bet you dat I fix him."

"Look out that he don't fix you first."

Ebenezer picked up his dripping, squalling kid, and lugged him into the kitchen.

"Run him through the wringing machine, Eben," cried Tommy, laughing merrily.

But Ebenezer was too mad to take any notice of the remark, and Mr. Bounce, who was standing at one of the windows, turned away for a good laugh after witnessing the kid's unexpected bath.

Old Mr. and Mrs. Bounce felt that they were about to live their lives over again with Tommy Bounce, Jr.; and although they loved their grandson dearly, the prospect was not at all flattering.

After the goat had given the little mope his evening bath

in a very unexpected manner, he began to nibble at the grass and to show that he had his appetite with him. Then Tommy proceeded to give him two or three heads of cabbage for his supper, and in various ways to convince him that he was the best friend he had in the world, provided he butted everybody else but him.

This the goat—surname Bill—seemed to agree to, and before parting company for the night, they were seemingly good friends.

The next morning he gave him a first-class breakfast, and still further knitted the bond of friendship between them, until Billy became reconciled to the harness and the novelty of drawing a cart.

There were one or two runaways before he became thoroughly broken in, the result of which was several scars and scratches, and several rents in Tommy's clothing.

But at the end of a week he had him thoroughly conquered, and a prouder boy than he was when seated in his little cart and trotting Billy up and down the road would have been hard to find.

And he used often to take the little Crow into the cart with him for a ride, and nearly frighten the life out of him as he urged the goat into his fastest gait.

But gradually Billy seemed to understand his youthful master, and to take part in his mischievous pranks, especially when there was any butting to be done.

There was an old fellow by the name of Cox, who lived about half a mile away, who took every occasion he could find to annoy Tommy and his goat, and to say that they both ought to be suppressed.

Tommy fairly ached to get even with the old rooster, and the goat appeared to be inspired with the same feelings, for whenever he saw him coming he would rear up on his hind legs and go through the motions of butting the stuffing out of him.

One day Tommy and the little darkey were out riding on the road, when they suddenly discovered old Cox just ahead of them, walking leisurely along, and apparently in deep thought.

"Hush! don't say a word, cooney, an' let's see what Billy will do," said Tommy, speaking in a whisper.

But the poor little coon was too much frightened at the speed Tommy was urging the goat into to make any reply.

Tommy stood up and with his whip urged him on faster and faster, while the little darkey held on for dear life, his eyes sticking out like two peeled onions.

The road was rough, and the little car bounded up and down as it sped along.

They made but little noise, as the road was soft, and fat old Mr. Cox did not dream of the fun there was in store for him.

Nearer and nearer the billy goat approached, seemingly knowing that his enemy had to be dealt with, and all the while doing his level best to overtake him.

Tommy put the gad to him like a little major.

Just then old Cox discovered that there was some kind of sensation in his rear, and he began to skip with the grace of a tame lobster.

CHAPTER III.

With a plunge which threw both of the boys out of the cart, Tommy's billy goat landed head first upon the broad back of Mr. Cox, tumbling the boys out with the goat on top of him, in the wildest and direst confusion.

"Oh—oh! help—help! murder! thieves! robbers! Take 'em off!" shouted the old man, while the goat was kicking him in the head like a young mule.

As for Tommy Bounce, he was mixed up so much that he scarcely knew who he was or where he was, and little George

Washington Abraham Lincoln Crow thought he was certainly murdered, and yelled even more lustily than old Cox did.

"I'm a dead man! Oh—oh—oh! Thieves and highwaymen! Take 'em off!" he yelled again.

But finally Tommy managed to extricate himself from the wreck, and yet before he could regain his feet and recapture his pugnacious goat, the lively little animal had got another chance at Mr. Cox.

The old fellow rolled over and got up on all fours, expecting every minute to be murdered in cold blood, presenting once again that broad and shining mark that the goat had reached so successfully before, and at it he went, striking him a tremendous blow and landing the old fellow on his nose a few feet further ahead.

"Oh—oh—oh! Now I am dead! Now I am stabbed!" he roared, picking himself up with great difficulty.

Tommy was in time to see the last show, and he laughed heartily over it of course, while little George Washington Abraham Lincoln was trying to pull himself out of a muddy ditch, into which he had been thrown almost out of sight.

"Oh, you vagabond! Oh, you—I—I—" and raising his umbrella for a terrific whack, he went for Tommy, who skipped like a terrier.

Around and around he ran, pursued by Cox, who in turn was pursued by the goat.

He didn't get within striking distance of Tommy, but the goat managed to get near enough to Cox to visit him two or three times with his hard head, almost knocking the wind out of him every time, and causing him to grunt like a kicked pig.

Finally he turned from Tommy to the goat, evidently determined to pound him into hash, and in the struggle the spunky little animal got tangled up in his harness and fell over helpless upon his back.

Cox went for him red hot, but after he had given him two or three heavy blows, Tommy went to the rescue.

Taking a big pin from his pocket, he shoved it into the fattest portion of the old man's body, causing him to whirl around and yell like a stuck pig.

Then he ran for Tommy again, thus giving the goat a chance to extricate himself, and consequently the wrathful rooster failed to get at either one of them.

"Oh, you murderous young villain! I'll get even with you for this," he yelled, shaking his fist at Tommy, who was far enough away to be in safety. "You are a murderer; you stabbed me in—in—in my person, intending to kill me. I'll have you arrested and sent to the Reform School. Yes, sir, I'll make an example of you."

"What are you going ter do with my goat?" asked Tommy, laughing at the old fellow's wrath.

"I—I'll kill him outright," said he, going to administer a kick to the animal.

But Billy was out of his troubles by this time, having worked himself free of his harness and clear of the cart. Consequently he was all ready for some more fun.

Cox didn't get him that time, but as he turned to chastise Tommy some more, he got a tremendous bang behind from Billy, that made him feel sick and inclined to give up the fight.

"Oh, you young villain! You diabolical little rascal! I'll have you in prison before night, see if I don't," said he, taking a seat on a rock near by to recover his wind.

"I didn't do nothin'. It was Billy," said Tommy, laughing.

"Oh, you young rascal, you set him on, and you afterward stabbed me with a knife at least a foot long! Ah! I am bleeding!" he added, springing up and rubbing the place he had been sitting on.

Tommy laughed until he was red in the face, and the goat came sidling up to him, shaking both ends of himself and acting just as though he wanted the fun to continue.

"I shall go to your parents, and if they uphold you in this deviltry, I'll have them arrested as well."

"All right. Go for dad," said Tommy.

"Yes, I will. I'll see if such things are to be allowed," said he, getting up and limping away, but turning quickly around every few steps, just as though he expected to receive further visits from the business end of that hard-headed goat.

Tommy at once turned his attention to rearranging his goat and cart. The little nig was bellowing like a bull calf. His head, wool, eyes, and mouth were full of mud, and he stood with outstretched hands, which were also covered with the sticky article, and seemed to think that his final end had come.

"Shut up! What's the matter with you?" said Tommy.

"Bah—bah—bah! I's all over!" was all he would say, but he kept up his yell.

"If you don't shut up I'll throw you inter the brook there, you big booby. Can't you have a little fun without blubberin' like a sick calf? Dry up!"

"Bah—bah—bah! I's all over!"

"Oh, I'll fix you!" and leaving his work upon the harness, he caught up the little nig and threw him into about a foot deep of water that stood by the roadside.

But it was deep enough for him to go under out of sight, and to frighten the life out of him almost. At all events, it washed the mud off of him, and then Tommy helped him out.

"Now see if yer'll shut up that big mouth of yours. Folks'll think we are killin' pigs 'round here. Shut up, or I'll chuck yer in again an' leave you there."

This produced the desired effect, for the dripping little coon stopped his noise, if he did not stop his crying.

"Yer big, black booby, what are you howlin' 'bout?"

"I's all wetty."

"Oh, get out! yer no tough. Now shut up, or you shan't ride home with me."

Gradually George Washington Abraham Lincoln simmered down, and by the time Tommy had his cart ready, he was on hand to take a hind seat for a ride home.

"Now, if anybody asks yer how yer got wet, say ye fell inter the brook. See?"

The little coon nodded sorrowfully.

"If yer don't, yer can't ride with me any more. Do yer mind that?"

Again that sorrowful nod.

Once headed for home, about half a mile distance, they were not long in reaching there. At all events, they got there almost as quick as Mr. Cox did.

But the indignant old fellow had got hold of the old man Bounce, Tommy's grandfather, and had already told him the story of his terrible assault, and how Tommy had stabbed him almost to death.

The old gentleman could but think what a chip of the old block the mischievous little rascal was, but apologizing as best he could, he promised to report the affair to his father when he came up from New York.

"All right, but if he does not punish him severely, I shall either take the law on him, or take it into my own hands, remember that, Mr. Bounce. I will not be abused in this manner for nothing," said he, turning and walking away.

"Tommy, you little rascal, come here," called the old gentleman, after Cox had gone.

"What is it, grandpop?"

"What have you been doing?"

"Havin' some fun," he replied innocently.

"What did you do to Mr. Cox?"

"Nothin'; Billy butted him, that's all."

"But he says you stabbed him."

"Ha—ha—ha! Well, that's good! Why, I only pricked him with a pin, so that he shouldn't kick Billy, that was all."

"Tommy, I fear you are a very bad boy, and this dreadful goat is only making you all the worse. I am sorry that your father was foolish enough to buy him for you. Now I shall tell him when he comes up, and you will get severely punished."

"I couldn't help it. Billy didn't like the looks of him, that's all."

"Don't talk to me, sir."

"All right. Ask Billy or the little coon," said Tommy, turning away.

"Ah! I can see that he is going to give his father as much trouble as he gave me," sighed the old man. "Well—well, I suppose it's all right that it should be so."

Meantime little George W. A. L. Crow had fallen into the hands of his father, who soon found out how wet he was.

"Whar you been, George Washington Abraham Lincoln; whar you been?"

"No whar," whined the kid.

"No whar! How you get all wet?"

"Been sweatin'."

"Go way, dar! Don't try fo' ter fool your parent. You been off wid dat bad Tommy Bounce some mo', I know."

"Been ridin' in der go' cart," he whined.

"But dat don't make you wet like dat. Go inter der kitchen and let yer mudder fan you wid de fire shovel," and whimperingly he obeyed.

But that billy goat was bound to make trouble with almost everything, and strange as it may seem, he went for Ebenezer Crow, the coachman, on every possible occasion, causing that sable individual to say words hot enough to melt beeswax.

The rascal seemed to know who he could get the most fun out of for his little master, and he never let a chance slip, although the son, George Washington Abraham Lincoln, got in for his share of it.

Tommy was lying off in the shade of a big chestnut tree that stood in the open lot between the house and barn one day. The goat was lying a few feet away, contentedly chewing his cud, and looking as honest as a tin peddler, while the little coon was seated near by.

It must have been two hours since either Tommy or the goat had been into any mischief, and both of them felt overcharged with goodness, while the coon wondered vaguely what the next fun would be.

It was a hot, dreamy day, and to tell the truth, Tommy felt rather too lazy to move around much, and the goat seemed entirely happy that things were just as they were.

Finally Tommy opened his eyes languidly, and was almost blinded by the reflection of the sun that shone upon a lot of his grandmother's milk pans, burnished like silver and hung there to dry.

Finally a new idea struck him.

"Want some fun, little Crow?"

"Yes," answered the kid sleepily.

"Go and get one of them milk pans and bring it here," said he, pointing to them.

"Wha' fo'?"

"Never mind. Go get it, I'll show you," and away went the little hunk of india rubber to hook one of the pans.

But Ebenezer discovered him before he could return to Tommy again.

"Heah! Wha' you do wid dat pan?"

"Tommy want it," said he.

This excited Ebenezer's curiosity, and he went out to the tree to find out what Tommy was going to do with the pan.

"Tommy Bounce, you better not get into no mo' mischief, fo' yer farder tolle me ter keep my eye on you," said he.

"Oh, he did, eh? Well, Squeezie, I wasn't a-goin' to do any mischief. I was only goin' to show Georgie how a bright tin pan will scare a goat," he said carelessly.

"Go 'way wid yer nonsense! Nuffin' won't scare a goat," replied Eben. "Nuffin' on de top ob de earth will scare a goat."

"Nonsense! A bright tin pan will scare a goat almost to death. Try it."

"How?"

"Why, just take it and hold it before him, and it'll frighten him so that he'll never go near you again."

"Am dat so fo' shuah?"

"Honest Indian."

"Well, dat am jes' what I want, fo' if dar am anything in de world dat I don't love, it am a goat."

"All right. That'll fix him. Try it."

The goat lay there as described, calmly and quietly chewing its cud, and Ebenezer took up the pan. If he really could frighten that tormenting goat so that he would never molest him again, he felt that he should be happy, for day or night, whenever he ventured out, he did not know at what moment he might get a butt that would make him see stars.

So he took up the pan, bright as a mirror, and slowly approached the tranquil goat. He showed it to him, but he kept on chewing his cud and took no notice of him whatever.

"Go 'way wid yer nonsense! I tolle yer dat a goat amn't afraid ob nuffin'."

"Oh, you want to hold it right in front of his snoot, so he can see himself in it," said Tommy.

Ebenezer felt anxious to know if there was really anything in the business, so he approached the goat's head and held the pan down low enough for him to see himself reflected in it, when he scrambled to his feet.

"That's it—that's the way to do it; keep it right in front of him, and bimeby he'll run like thunder!" said Tommy.

The goat did run; he ran backward a few feet, and then he made a dive for the supposed other goat he saw reflected in the bottom of the pan, and in doing so knocked Ebenezer heels over head, and nearly mashed the bottom out of the pan.

Eben yelled bloody murder, and Tommy actually rolled on the ground, so tickled was he at the result of his little job.

The demoralized darkey tried to get up, but every time he attempted to do so, Billy would go for him again and butt him all out of form.

It did seem as though Tommy would laugh himself into hysterics, while the little coon began to cry, thinking that his daddy was about to be killed.

One, two, three bangs did fat Ebenezer receive, and it seemed impossible for him to get upon his feet again, unless somebody went to his assistance.

That somebody, in the person of his wife, quickly put in an appearance, and with a broom drove the goat away.

"What you do down dar?" she demanded indignantly.

Ebenezer gathered himself up and looked wildly around him.

"What you do down dar playin' wid dat goat?" she asked again.

"I—I warn't a playin' wid de goat."

"Yer warn't?"

"N—no," he stammered.

"What de matter, den?"

"De goat—de goat play wid me," said he mournfully, whereat Tommy yelled with laughter and rolled on the ground.

"Ebenezer Crow, I's 'shamed ob yer, out heah foolin' wid boys an' goats!"

"I tolle yer, honey, I warn't a foolin'."

"Well, what you do, den?"

"I—I—" and he hesitated and looked at Tommy, who had laughed himself almost silent.

"I s'pose yer out heah playin' wid Tommy Bounce, an' he play some trick on yer. Smart, ain't yer? Great big man like yer, farder ob a family!"

"Now, honey, I tolle yer how dat war. Tommy he tolle me dat if I hole a bright pan up afro' de goat he git frighten an' neber come nea' me any mo'. Well, I hole de pan afro' de goat, an'—"

"Dat settle it. You am a big fool, Ebenezer, an' I'se s'prized at yer," said she indignantly.

"Wha' fo? How dat, honey?"

"Don't call me honey, if you such a big fool as dat."

"How dat?"

"Don't yer see nuffin'? Don't yer know dat Tommy Bounce put up de job on yer jis' ter make big fool ob yer? Oh, go hide yer head! Who would think dat a big man like you let a little boy make a fool ob him? Go 'way! Don't want nuffin' ter do wid anybody dat don't know mo'n you do," and turning away, indignantly, she left and returned to the house.

Ebenezer turned reproachfully upon the laughing little mischief-maker, who sat on the ground before him.

"Thomas Bounce, do you know what you hab done?" he asked in a most mournful tone of voice.

"Me? I didn't do anything. It was the goat that did it," said Tommy.

"You make a 'strangement.'"

"A what?"

"You an' dat goat make a 'strangement' between husband an' wife, one ob de greatest sins dat can be committed."

"Oh, go shoot yourself. I didn't do anything."

"But you tolle me dat I frighten de goat."

"Well, why didn't you?"

"Tommy, dat war a trick of yours."

"No, it was a trick of Billy's. You and he had the fun all to yourselves; I had nothing to do with it. Go 'long!"

"Tommy, I shall tolle your farder when he comes home, an' he nearly skin you if he know de duty ob a parent," and with a homesick look on his black mug, he started away to attend to his duties in the barn.

Tommy laughed until he was sick, and he and his billy goat became seemingly better friends than ever from that moment.

It was lucky for him, however, that his father did not go home from the city but once a week, or Tommy would never have been able to sit down at all.

His mother, of course, reproved him, and told him what terrible things his father would do to him when he returned, but her indignation seldom lasted until he really did get home. Besides, Tommy was a very handsome boy, and had many first-class points that anybody would have admired. He was brave, kind and generous. His only failure was mischief and practical jokes; the very things that he inherited from his father, and which stamped him a chip of the old block.

Besides that, he was really a great favorite with the grandparents, so that by working it finely he managed to escape with only a few "warnings."

But Tommy could not keep out of mischief any more than he could keep from breathing; and as he had the run of the old homestead farm, it is no wonder that he found lots of employment.

Among other stock owned by his grandfather, there were a pair of bulls, sober old fellows, that he had owned for many years, and Tommy had for a long time been studying how he could have some fun with them, and finally he struck upon an idea.

CHAPTER IV.

These sober old bulls before-mentioned were exceedingly tame, and, for the most part, were hanging around the barnyard, as though too old or too aristocratic to go out to the pasture with the other stock.

Tommy Bounce made up his mind to have some fun with them, and, for the time being, his goat was forgotten. The bulls were larger, and he felt sure that he could have more fun with them.

Of course little George Washington Abraham Lincoln Crow was his constant companion, and it is nothing to be wondered at that he learned much of the deviltry which so distinguished Tommy, or that it should have created many anxious moments for his father, Ebenezer Crow.

"I dun know fo' sartin what dat boy am up to," said he to

his wife one day, "but dar am deviltrums in de wind, an' I'll bet wages on it."

"Nice man you is if you can't find out what he am up ter," said she indignantly, for since he had allowed the little mischief to play so many pranks on him, she did not entertain a very exalted opinion of her fat husband.

"Who dat?" he asked wonderingly.

"Who dat? Who—you!"

"Honey, I don't un'erstan' your allusions."

"You don't? Great big overgrown man like you ter let a little boy like Tommy make such a fool ob you; I disgusted all ober."

"Now, sweetness, how I help it? He am de wuss boy dat I eber knowed."

"An' you am de biggest fool dat I eber knowed."

"Honey, I don't like de consanguinity ob your remarks," said Eben haughtily.

"All right; den you can go shoot yourself!" and she flaunted away, leaving poor Eben very much taken aback.

"As shuah as I's bo'n, dat boy'll make a refrigerator between me an' my wife. Dar hab got ter be some suddenness put ter de career ob dat youthful cuss, an' if he farder won't do it, I hab got ter do it myself, dat am sartin; I wonder whar he am now? An' I wonder whar George Washington Abraham Lincoln is? Most likely he am wid him somewhar, fo' he seems ter like him better dan a nig lubs coon meat. I jus' go an' fin' dat offspring ob mine an' gib him de debil on principle, fo' de good book say: 'spar de rod, spile de chile,' an' I isn't gwine ter do it."

Thus resolved, he went in search of the young Crow, but could not find him. He was undoubtedly away somewhere with Tommy Bounce, but where, heaven only knew.

But Tommy and the little coon knew where they were.

They were out in the pasture back of the barn where the two bulls were, and were getting on the right side of them; that is to say, George Washington Abraham Lincoln was feeding them with young cabbages, which they had pulled up in the garden, and Tommy Bounce was trying to harness or yoke them together.

He had studied the situation, and was trying to find out how he could yoke them together in the regular way, but being unable to do so, he had hit upon an original idea.

In the barn he found a lot of spun yarn (small sized tarred rope), and with this he concluded he could make a yoke for the two bulls.

And this is how he went to work to do it. While the little coon was feeding them with the cabbages, Tommy was tying the tails of the two bulls together with the tarred rope, and in such a way as to make it almost impossible for them to get apart.

"Give it to 'em, cooney; give 'em all they can take," said he, as he proceeded to put in a few finishing knots.

"What you do?" asked the little Crow.

"Yoking up ther bulls."

"What fo'?"

"Why, we're going ter have a ride."

"Whar?"

"On the bulls."

"Golly, won't that be fun!"

"Yer bet it will. Come, now, that's all right. Git up on the red bull, and I'll take the speckled one. Here you go!" he added, boosting the little nig upon the bull's back.

Then he got a box to stand on that enabled him to mount the other bull, and with a switch he began to touch up the lazy animals.

Finally, they began to wonder what they had a load on their backs for, and so started slowly ahead.

But in doing so they became separated a little, or just enough to pull each other's tails, which, of course, woke them up a bit.

Then they began to run, at first alongside of each other.

"Gee up! gee whoa! whoa!" yelled Tommy, as he whipped them smartly.

"Yah, yah, yah!" laughed the little nig, as he clung to the hair of the bull.

It was bully fun for him just then, but the business had only just commenced.

"Whoop her up!" yelled Tommy, hitting first one and then the other of the bulls, causing them to run like mischief. "G'lang!"

Just then Ebenezer Crow discovered the circus and the imminent danger that his own precious kid was in.

"Oh, oh, Lo'd o' massy!" he exclaimed, as the two bulls came tearing around into the open lot between the house and barn. "Dey'll be killed all ter pieces fo' shuah; whoa, dar, whoa!" he yelled, starting on a run after them.

But being fat and lazy, he could not overtake them very fast, and just before coming up to them, and while his kid and Tommy were yelling, one in fear and the other in encouragement, the two aggravated bulls ran—one on each side of a cherry tree—and, of course, when they came to their tails, they came to a stop.

"Git up!" yelled Tommy, putting his gad to the bull he was riding, while the little coon was clinging to the hair of the other for dear life and yelling for help.

Meantime the bulls were pulling each other's tails dreadfully, endeavoring to get apart, which they were unable to do, and of course they became very mad.

"Whoa, dar! whoa—whoa!" exclaimed Ebenezer, rushing up and trying to rescue his kid from his perilous position.

"Whoop her up! G'lang!" shouted Tommy, applying more gad to the bulls.

"Whoa, dar, whoa!" said Ebenezer, coaxingly.

But when he was on the point of taking little George Washington Abraham Lincoln from the bull's back, Mr. Bull wheeled suddenly upon him, and catching him with his short horns just where he sat down, he raised him into the air about ten feet.

He came down plump upon his belly, knocking the wind and life almost out of him, and at that moment Grandpapa Bounce rushed up and cut the ropes which bound the two infuriated bulls together, allowing them to go in different directions.

The one that little Crow was riding proceeded to jump up and throw the kid head first upon the ground (but as his head was hard, of course it did not hurt him), while the old speckled one on which Tommy was taking his ride started away at a wild gallop, bellowing and kicking like mad.

But Tommy clung to him like a flea to a dog's back. Away he went, smashing down a garden fence, and rushing wildly over all sorts of shrubbery and flower beds, and finally into a lot of trees, evidently for the purpose of rubbing his tormentor from his back.

Tommy saw his danger, however, and as he flew under an apple tree, he reached up and caught hold of one of the limbs, and the next instant he swung himself safely up into the branches out of danger.

Once free from his hector, the bull stopped and turned, as if to get even by tossing him, but Tommy was out of reach.

"No, yer don't, old man!" said he, while the bull bellowed, pawed the earth and shook his head at him.

"Oh, it's all right. I understand. You needn't bow and scrape, and be so polite; I'm much obliged all the same. No, thank you, I won't come down. I don't care to ride any further; I've had enough, old fellow. Da-da! Go an' see Ebenezer; he wants some more. Ta-ta!" said he.

Meantime Tommy's mother, grandparents, and everybody about the place, had rushed to the rescue, expecting of course to find him dead or all broken to pieces.

As for Ebenezer Crow, he picked himself up with difficulty, and still holding his fat belly in both hands, he limped toward the house, followed by the little nig, bellowing as though half dead.

The infuriated bull was finally driven from the tree in which

Tommy had taken refuge, and the little rascal was ordered down.

"Thomas Bounce, you will surely be the death of me," said his mother, seizing him by the arm. "Only wait until your father comes home, and I'll warrant you will get the warmest basting you ever had."

"I didn't do nothing," said he.

"Nothing! I should say not. What mischief will you get into next?"

"I—I was only taking a ride."

"A ride!" exclaimed his grandfather. "What made you tie the bulls together?"

"Well, I couldn't yoke 'em by the head, so I thought I'd yoke 'em by the tail so that me an' little Crow could have a ride together, that's all," said he, laughingly.

"You are a very bad boy," said his mother, "and you shall go without your dinner to pay for it. Remember, now."

"And when your father comes I shall tell him all about it," added his grandmother.

"Well, can't a fellow have any fun?"

"Fun! Do you call such dangerous business as that fun?"

"Of course. There ain't no fun unless yer has a little excitement."

"And look at poor Ebenezer and his boy," said his grandfather.

Tommy turned just in time to see them, and in spite of himself he burst into a loud fit of laughter, while the kid kept roaring and Ebenezer continued his grunting.

"Tommy Bounce, I—I's gwine to pay you fo' dis yer," moaned Eben.

"Pay me? Yer don't owe me nothin'," said he, laughing. "Go pay the old bull."

"Tommy Bounce, the debil hab got a mortgage on you fo' certain."

"All right."

"An' he's gwine fo' ter fo'close on it in a berry little while." "Going for clothes?"

"Don't trifle wid me, chile, fo' I's bad!" said he, savagely.

"Where do yer feel the most bad—in yer breadbasket?" he asked, laughing.

"Thomas Bounce, you behave yourself!" said his mother, going to the house.

"All right, mammy; honest Injun!"

"You was born ter be hung fo' shuah, and I knows it," said Ebenezer.

"What's the matter with you?"

"Wha' you do, hey?"

"Hay! I didn't do anything with hay."

"Wha' you do wid dem bulls; wha' dat bull do wid me?"

"Raised yer, I guess," said he, laughing.

"Wha' he do wid little George Washington Abraham Lincoln?"

"Give it up."

"All right; now min' wha' you farder do ter you when he comes home, jus' you min' dat; I tolle him all 'bout it."

"Oh, bah! Why didn't you keep out of the way? Then the bull wouldn't have touched yer. Never fool with a bull, Squeeler," said he, laughing and turning away.

"I fool wid you bimeby you bet," he muttered, going to see how nearly his little nig was used up.

His indignant wife met him at the kitchen door. She had just been spanking George Washington Abraham Lincoln for disobeying her and playing with Tommy Bounce, and she was all ready now for Ebenezer.

"Ebenezer Crow, I'se gwine fo' ter leab you. Hear dat?" she asked, savagely.

"Who dar—what dat?"

"'Cos you is such a big fool. But it serve me right. I allus knowed dat you warn't half-witted."

"Why, Assypidity Crow!" exclaimed Ebenezer, starting back.

"Oh, dat's all right, but you is too big a fool fo' any decent

woman to lib wid. Dat Tommy Bounce, he all de while play you fo' a sucker an' win de game ebery time."

"Well, he am a berry bad boy."

"An' you am a bad fool!"

"Honey!"

"Shut up!" she exclaimed, and turning, she vanished into the house.

"Trouble am a beginnin' fo' ter brew fo' me, an' all on 'count ob dat Tommy Bounce; I jus' took him in han' myself. I'se got de feelin's ob a farder, an' I think I am capable ob goin' fo' him," he mused, walking toward the barn.

Tommy in the meantime had gone to the barn himself to finish his laugh, and when he saw Ebenezer come in he resolved to have some more fun with him, just as Ebenezer resolved to have fun with him.

From his concealment in the hay mow he could see him shake his head and hear him mutter about the terrible things he was going to do the very next time he got his hand on that terrible Tommy.

"I shook him right out ob his clothes," said he, striking his big fist into the palm of his hand with a terrible whack.

"Ebenezer Crow!" called Tommy, from his concealment, and in a sepulchral tone of voice, which caused Eben to start up in affright and imagine that a ghost was speaking to him.

"Oh, Lord!" he moaned.

"Go slow, Ebenezer Crow!
Don't do it, or you'll rue it.
Take a tumble, and be humble,
Or the devil will get you sure."

"Oh, Lord! Who dat spoke?"

"The ghost of your father."

"Oh, Lord!" he moaned, and down he went on his marrow bones and began to pray.

But if he had not been frightened so that the strength forsook his legs, he would have done some lively skipping out of that without ever stopping to pray.

"Go and kiss your wife, Ebenezer!" came again, in those blood-curdling tones. "Go kiss her and make up."

"Oh, dear!" he groaned.

"Go at once!"

Without waiting for any further orders, he struggled to his feet and started for the house as fast as he could go, while Tommy skipped out of his concealment and down behind a fence, along which he ran while out of sight, and managed to reach the house about as soon as Ebenezer did.

The terrified darkey rushed into the presence of his astonished wife with his wool standing on end, almost.

"Assifidity!"

"What de matter wid you?" she asked.

"Oh! honey!"

"What de matter now?"

"Oh, sweetness, I seen a ghost!"

"Seed what?"

"A ghost out in de barn, an' he tolle me fo' ter—ter—oh, honey, I'se all broken up!" he whispered, faintly.

"Oh, shut up wid yer nonsense! I really believe dat you is turnin' fool!" said his wife, impatiently.

"Don't talk dat way, sweetness; I—I hearn him speak shuah."

"Nonsense! What you hear?"

"My farder's ghost!"

"How you know?"

"'Cos he say so; an' he tell me ter go right in an' kiss an' make up wid you, honey."

"Go 'long wid you' nonsense! Dat Tommy Bounce been foolin' you some mo'."

"Oh, no—no!"

"Bet you ten dollar' dat he did. He can make fool ob you all de time."

"Don't I tolle yer dat I seed him. an' hear him spoke like him come from de grave?"

"Don't b'lieve nuffin' 'bout it 'tall. Go 'long 'bout you' work, an' don't be a fool. The idea ob a farder ob a family makin' such a donkey ob himself. Go 'long."

Ebenezer didn't feel exactly right about going back to the barn again without obeying the orders of the supposed ghost, so he seized his wife around the waist and attempted to kiss her at all events.

But she was in no humor for nonsense, and having a pan of applesauce in her hand at the moment, she threw it all over him, and then banged him over the head with the pan until he yelled for mercy, and roused the whole house.

"Now, you jus' go 'bout your business an' keep 'way from me, or I'll break you all ter pieces!" said she, pointing to the door.

Ebenezer didn't wait to be told again, but scooping the applesauce out of his eyes with his fingers, he left the kitchen.

Tommy was just outside with his goat.

"What's the matter, Squeeler?" he asked, laughing heartily. "The old gal been saucing you?"

"You better keep shy ob me," replied Ebenezer. "You hab been de cos ob all dis yer trouble."

"Me! That's right; lay everything to me; I threw the applesauce on you, of course," replied Tommy, sadly, just as though he felt real bad about it.

But all the while he was trying to get near enough to pin a piece of red cloth to his coat tail, the identical piece that he had learned his goat to "go for" wherever and whenever he saw it.

"Well, I'se done wid you from dis time out fo' eber mo'."

"What! never going ter speak ter a feller again; going clear back on me?"

"Yes, an' I strongly suspect dat I shall leab my wife, too," he added.

"Better go soak your head!" yelled his wife, who had overheard his last remark.

"Dat's all right, Mrs. Crow, but when my wife abstroculates herself so as you hab, it am about time fo' manhood ter 'sert itself."

She saw Tommy fooling around her "saucy" husband, and suspecting some mischief, called to him to look out. Ebenezer turned upon him, but he had accomplished his design, and stood looking as honest as a sheep.

"What's ther matter? I arn't doing anything."

"Well, you better not. I'se a bad man 'bout now, an' you better look out."

Meantime the goat had discovered the bit of red cloth, and was quietly walking around, trying to get a chance to butt it.

"Go 'long 'bout you' business, you big fool, or bimeby he do somethin' mo' ter yer," said she.

"All right fo' you, Mrs. Crow, I go hang myself," said he, turning sadly away.

He had scarcely done so when the goat landed head first upon that bit of red cloth attached to his coat tails, knocking him sprawling upon the ground.

Even his wife could not help laughing as he lay there hallooing murder, and the little coon joined the general hurrah as the goat continued to charge upon him the moment he attempted to arise.

CHAPTER V.

From that moment Tommy's goat was doomed. Not only did Ebenezer vow red-headed vengeance upon him, but everybody on the place and every neighbor vowed and determined that Billy should either die or leave the place.

Mr. Bounce came home the evening of the day of the last goat racket, and after getting his regular weekly "warming" on account of the deviltry he had been engaged in, he began to feel that Billy was rather an expensive pet and luxury, so far as his person was concerned, and although vowing to get hunk with Ebenezer for "squealing" to his father, he concluded that something would have to be done with the goat.

And his grandfather made up his mind that something should happen to Billy, and so it seemed rather dubious regarding him.

"Tommy, I can't stand it any longer," said he, alluding to the matter.

"Me, too, grandpop," replied Tommy, rubbing the most bulbous portion of his body.

"What's the matter?" asked the old gent, looking curiously at him.

"Dad's been sitting down on me with his hand," said Tommy, mournfully.

"I guess you set down on his hand a little too suddenly," replied the old gent, smiling.

"No, his hand stopped too hard."

"Well, I am glad that he knows what you want."

"Want! I didn't want a spanking."

"But you needed it, though."

"No, I didn't. I could have got along without it, you bet."

"But you deserved it. In fact, you deserve one every day, and I'm glad your father knows how to give it to you."

"Ah, I'll bet you didn't give it to him that way when he was a boy."

"Well, yes, I did, when he deserved it."

"An' didn't he deserve it just as much as I do?" asked Tommy, brightening up.

"Ah—r, well," the old man hesitated, remembering very well what sort of a fellow his father was at his age, "but little boys shouldn't ask too many questions."

"Oh, I'll bet he did."

"And as for that goat—your father is going to box him up and take him back to New York, for he is worse than you are, if possible."

"I don't care," muttered Tommy, as his grandfather walked away.

But after a night's sleep he awoke up as bright as ever, having forgotten all about his troubles of the night before, and was just as ready as ever for some fun, although it was Sunday.

After breakfast he went out to catch his goat. His grandmother saw him and mistook what he was up to.

"Now you, Tommy Bounce, you jist come right into the house. You must remember that this is the blessed Sabby day, and you must not play," said she.

"Who's goin' ter play? See that?" he asked, holding up a little book. "Goin' out here under the chestnut tree to study my Sunday-school lesson."

"Well, see that you do, for it's dreadful wicked to play on the Sabby day."

"All right," and away he went.

In a few minutes he was followed by that kid of Ebenezer Crow, little George Washington Abraham Lincoln, and that was a pretty sure sign of some fun.

The goat also espied him, and with a joyous shake of head and tail he followed, also expecting to have some fun, for he seemed to enjoy it as much as Tommy did.

"Guess they won't box you up an' send you away from me," said Tommy, caressingly.

Billy reared up, first fore and then aft, as much as to say: "I'll give 'em some fun if they attempt it."

Tommy took his accustomed seat under the old chestnut tree, and having his book handy in case anybody approached, he began to think of how he could get up a racket.

"Halloo, little Crow," said he as G. W. A. L. put in an appearance. "Where yer goin'?"

"Go fo' fun, eh?"

"Fun? What fun?"

"I'd no," said he, sitting down near where Billy stood.

"Want ter have a circus?"

"Yes, Tommy."

"Oh, bushels of fun in it. Go an' get a rope; there's one in the barn."

Away went the little coon, and soon returned with a piece of rope about ten feet long, which Tommy proceeded to tie around the goat's neck.

But just as he had finished doing so he heard his father calling him to return to the house. Hastily tying the other end of the rope to the hind axletree of the family carriage that was standing in front of the barn, all ready to take the family to church, he told the little Crow to watch him until he returned, thinking, of course, that he could humbug his father just as he had his grandmother about his Sunday-school lesson.

But he was mistaken, and, instead of being allowed to return, as he anticipated, he was sent upstairs to his room.

And neither was the little Crow allowed to remain out of sight.

"You George Washington Abraham Lincoln, come right in de house heah, an' don't let me catch you foolin' 'round out dar any mo' ter day," called his mother. "Bimeby you get ter goin' off wid dat Tommy and his goat, an' if you do, I broke ebery bone in you skin."

So the little fellow was choked off and doomed to do without his anticipated fun.

The goat, thus left alone, took matters quietly, and leaping up behind, he took his stand upon the baggage rack and remained there complacently chewing his cud until Ebenezer went out to hitch up the horses to drive to church.

And even then he didn't move, but perhaps thinking there was a ride in store, he kept his position, and being well out of sight, nobody noticed him until Mr. and Mrs. Bounce and the old folks were seated in the carriage and on the way to church, being driven, of course, by Ebenezer.

But then, even, he was not discovered by anybody on or in the coach, but by those whom they passed on the road, and much of a marvel was it and many a laugh did it create to see a goat perched up behind on a coach like a footman, and keeping his balance without apparent effort.

What did it mean? Was Mr. Bounce doing this to show off? If so, it seemed to the sober church-goers to be a very strange thing to do on Sunday.

But Billy was enjoying his ride hugely, although whenever the wheels went into a rut it nearly "jounced" him off.

Just about a mile before reaching the church they had to cross the New York & New Haven Railroad, and a few rods before striking it Ebenezer hurried up the horses so as to get across ahead of the train, the whistle of which showed it to be near at hand.

But this hurry up was a bad thing for Billy, for when the wheels struck into a rut it threw him off in a badly shaken-up condition and any way but on his feet, and being held by the rope, he was of course dragged along at a fearful rate.

He just managed to regain his feet, however, intending to keep up with the horses, when they flew across the railroad track just ahead of the train, but escaping it only by less than a yard.

Billy, however, did not escape it, poor fellow! the locomotive striking him squarely, and—that goat, oh, where was he?

It was a dreadful narrow escape for the occupants of the carriage, but the horses had become frightened, and Ebenezer Crow had all he could do to quiet them, let alone holding them in.

But that finished Tommy's goat. He had been a butter all his life and was butted out of existence at last himself by something that could do more of it than ever he could.

And yet so thankful were they all that the pest was finished, they soon forgot their own narrow escape, although how in the name of wonder he ever got hitched to the coach was a mystery.

"Fo' de Lord, I dun neber was so glad 'bout anything in my

life. Dat goat hab all gone bust up now fo' shuah," said Ebenezer after the folks had gotten over their fright.

"But don't you ever dare to take such a risk in crossing a railroad again," said Mr. Bounce, severely.

"I couldn't help it, boss."

"Nonsense. When you heard the whistle why didn't you pull up until the train had gone past?"

"I tried fo' ter do it, but they go scare, an' I couldn't hold 'em. But de finger ob de Lord am in it, shuah."

"How so?"

"I fink it was a put-up job by Providence fo' ter kill dat goat."

"Well, don't you take any more such chances, goat or no goat, unless you are all alone and in some other man's carriage."

The moment the carriage got out of sight Tommy Bounce left his room and went in search of his goat, thinking, of course, that Ebenezer had untied him before setting out, but could not find him high or low.

When, however, the family returned with the news of Billy's butting match, in which he got the worst of it, Tommy felt just bad enough to cry, and little Crow did blubber like a booby, notwithstanding the fact that he had been so roughly used by him often.

"Squeezor Crow, you don't know enough to clean boots," said Tommy, indignantly. "Why didn't you untie him before you went off to church?"

Ebenezer looked puzzled.

"How I know he war dar?"

"Oh, pshaw! You wouldn't have known it if there'd been a cow tied behind."

"Tommy, I's glad dat he am killed."

"I wish it had been you instead of the goat," replied Tommy, indignantly. "But that's all right for you. Bet I'll get hunk with you to pay for that. see if I don't."

"I don't care nuffin 'bout you, now dat de goat am gone, Tommy," replied Ebenezer.

"We'll see whether you do or not," he replied, turning away.

In truth, Tommy did feel very bad about losing the goat in such a tragic way, but he braced himself up with a resolution to get even with Ebenezer, whom he blamed about the matter entirely. In fact, he could not bear to wait for a chance to present itself naturally.

"What shall I do?" he said to himself, and then he began to think. "By Jingo, I have it. Oh I'll make him sick," said he, as a satisfied smile spread over his face.

Going to the kitchen he managed to steal a handful of red pepper.

From there he went out to the barn.

Ebenezer had unharnessed the horses and had placed them in their stalls, where they were eating their lunch; after doing which he always took them out to curry them down and clean them off.

Tommy watched his chance, and after Ebenezer had put the horses up and had gone into the kitchen to eat his dinner while the horses were eating theirs, he sprinkled one of the horses—the red one—all over with the red pepper, after which he got out of the way and prepared to see the sport.

It was nearly an hour afterward when Ebenezer went to the barn to give the horses their rubbing down.

He took the gray one first, all the while singing:

"Dat blasted goat am all bust up,
Whoa, dar, whoa dar!
De engine bust him in de snoot,
Whoa de du dar day.
I's boun' ter laugh all night,
I's boun' ter grin all day,
I'll bet my money on de big bullgine,
Whoa, de du dar day."

All the while he was currying the gray horse he was singing this song, with a dozen variations, and looking as happy as a big sun-flower that nods and bends to the breeze; but Tommy Bounce was secreted where he could see without being seen.

"Oh, Tommy Bounce, he feel so bad,
Whoa, dar, whoa, dar!
Fo' his ole goat he catched it bad.
Whoa, de du dar day.
Dat goat he butts dis chile no mo',
Whoa, dar, whoa, dar!
De debil he hab got him shuah,
Whoa, de du dar day!"

Then he led the red horse out into the barn-floor to put him through the same course of sprouts, and to treat him to verses of the same song.

But before he had worked on him half a minute he began to sneeze, and Tommy walked soberly in to see the sport.

"So yer glad the goat is dead, eh?" he asked.

"Tommy, I's gladder den—ah—te—chew!" he yelled as the red pepper did its work.

"Gladder than what?"

"I's—I's—ah—te—chew! whoop!"

"What's the matter with yer? What yer whoopin' 'bout? First thing yer know dad'll be out here and make yer whoop!"

"Tommy, I—I's only got a little cole—I—ah—te—chew! Dat's—dat's all—ah—te—chew! whoop!"

"Bad cold yer got, Squeezee," said Tommy, laughing.

"Putty bad cold, Tommy; I—I—ah—te—chew! whoop—yah!"

He was getting it bad, but still he kept at it, and the more he curried the horse the more did the pepper fly about. In fact, Tommy himself put in a few first-class sneezes, just because he couldn't help it and just to keep Ebenezer company.

"You got cold, too, Tommy?"

"Got it bad, Squeezee."

"Putty bad time fo'—ah—te—chew! I—I—whoop!" was his response.

Just then Tommy's father put in an appearance.

"What's all this row about?" he asked.

"Well, boss, de fac' is dat I—ah—te—chew! whoop—la!"

"What?"

"I's got a werry bad cole, boss."

"Well, I should say you had; but I don't understand why you should make such a devil of a racket about it."

"Der trouble is, Massa Bounce, dat I—ah—te—chew! neber had such a cole in de head in—"

"Whew! ah—te—chew!" put in Mr. Bounce, having inhaled some of the red pepper.

"By gollies, you hab got a cole, too!"

"Cold, thunder! What is there in this barn?" he asked, looking around.

"Hay! Cattle an' hosses, an'—ah—te—chew!" was his reply.

"Whew! I tell you there is something wrong here. What is it?"

"Guess we all got inter de draf' and git bad cole; ah—te—chew! whoop—la!" he yelled, this time being affected so dreadfully that he sneezed himself off his feet and turned almost a complete somersault from the concussion.

Hearing the noise, old Grandpa Bounce came out to the barn to see what the cause of it was, and found Ebenezer, his son and grandson sneezing away at a wild rate.

Ebenezer kept right on stirring up the hair and red pepper, and before the old man could get an answer to his question regarding the cause of the outbreak, he broke out himself as loud as any of them, sneezing his teeth out almost.

Then, before any explanation could be given, old Mrs. Bounce came out to see what it could be that was so disturbing the "Sabby day," and she in turn began to yell: "Ah—te—chew!"

and to go through various gymnastic performances while doing so, greatly to the delight of little Tommy Bounce and the little coon, George Washington Abraham Lincoln.

And the two horses began to kick and sneeze and one of them seized Tommy by the seat of his trousers and shook him for a moment as a terrier does a rat, and among them all such a hurrah and sneezing concert took place as was never known before.

"Tommy, I—ah—te—chew!" said Mr. Bounce, reaching for his young hopeful, but failing to connect on account of a terrible sneeze, which nearly threw him on his beam ends.

"There's—there's—ah—te—chew! in this place. There's snuff—" said grandpapa.

"We're all up to snuff," suggested Tommy.

"There's snuff or—"

"Ah—te—chew!"

"Somebody has—"

"Whoop!" put in Ebenezer, flying back against the side of the barn as though a mule had kicked him.

"Ebenezer, what is the matter here?" demanded Mr. Bounce, trying to draw his face out so as to look earnest.

"Boss, I—I—ah—te—chew!"

"What?"

"I gubs it up. Fust I thought we all hab big cole. Now I gubs it up, 'cos I dont' know what de matter is wid—ah—te—chew! whoop!"

That was how he finished it.

By this time, and after sneezing themselves almost into double knots, they began to think that something was really wrong, and to get out of the barn into the open air.

Tommy got out with the rest, but there was such a look of deviltry on his handsome face that his father began to suspect that he had been playing some joke upon them.

"Me! How'd I know what made us all sneeze?" said he in response. "Guess Ebenezer's been putting up a job."

"There has something been put up, just as sure as snakes," said Mr. Bounce. "Tommy, if I catch you at it, you won't be able to sit down for a month."

"All right. Lay everything on me. I'm only a little boy, but I can stand it."

By this time everybody, with the exception of Ebenezer, was out of the barn, and he and the horses were the only ones who were indulging in the sneeze.

"Tommy, tell me; I won't warm you," said his father, who strongly suspected that his son had been putting up some sort of a job.

"Well, Squeezee said he was glad that Billy was dead," said Tommy, whiningly.

"Yes, but this sneezing?"

"Give it up, pop."

"You know nothing about it, Tommy?"

"Of course not."

"Well, it's lucky you do not. But it is devilish strange, anyhow."

"But I guess Ebenezer's getting his pay."

"Oh, you think so, do you? Come out into the woodshed with me. I wish to wrestle with you a little while."

"I didn't do nothing, pop!"

"But this awful smell; this pepper—for it must be so—where did it come from?"

"Give it up, pop."

"I believe you know."

"Know nothing."

But while this conversation was going on, poor Ebenezer was trying to sneeze the wool all off his head.

It was a first-class affair of its kind, but nobody wanted it repeated.

The horses became almost wild over the noise and excitement attending the case, and it was a great triumph for Tommy, and he enjoyed it, you bet.

But as the summer was drawing to an end, and the Bounce family were on the point of returning to the city, Tommy's

father concluded that the best thing he could do for his troublesome son was to send him to some boarding school.

CHAPTER VI.

Yes, it came to be an understood thing that Tommy Bounce was to be taken back to New York and sent to one of the many boarding schools in and around the city, his father hoping thereby to break up some of his mischief.

And at the same time he could remember how it was with himself when he was sent to school at Andover, and how little it sobered him down, and how very slight the improvement was in him on account of it.

"But I'll send him, anyway," said he, "for perhaps he will find a teacher who will fetch him to the 'tan-line' and keep him there better than I was kept. At all events, I shall be relieved of some of the thrashings, and a part of the responsibility of his future will be taken from my shoulders."

And so when the weather began to grow cooler, in the latter part of September, the Bounce family, together with Ebenezer Crow and family, started for New York.

Never did grandparents part with relations with more pleasure, for during the whole of their three months' stay the old homestead had been in one continual hurrah of excitement on account of Tommy and his pranks, and the old folks were only too glad to get a breathing spell and have a few weeks of quiet.

"Good-bye, grandpop—good-bye, granny!" said the little rascal, putting up his fist for a good-bye shake. "Take good care of yerselves an' go ter bed early."

They looked at him in wonder.

"Look out for grandpa, granny, an' see that he don't go out skylarkin' with the gals nights, for he's a game old rooster!"

"What is that you say?" demanded the old man, opening his eyes. "Thomas Bounce, I ought to take a strap and give you a good lacing before you go," said he.

"So you had, Josiah," said the old lady.

"Oh, no, I'm all packed for traveling. I don't want ter be 'strapped' or 'laced;' I'm all fixed. Ta-ta! Be good ter each other, and I'll bring yer somethin' nice the next time I come. Day day."

"Thomas Bounce, you are a very bad boy, an' goodness only knows where you'll fetch up," said his grandmother, shaking her head sadly.

"Oh, I'll fetch up all right. I'm ticketed for York. Ta-ta!" and kissing his hand, he ran and jumped into the carriage.

"Goodness only knows how glad we are to get rid of him," murmured the old lady.

"Don't say that, Maria, for something might happen to him," said the old man.

"Oh, I'm certain there will."

"Besides, you know, he's only a chip of the old block. Thomas was just like him when he was his age, and you know it."

"Well, what of that?"

"Hasn't he turned out all right?"

"Yes, but it was all owin' tu his early trainin'. We brought him up better than Thomas is bringin' him up."

The old man laughed and turned away as the carriage started for the depot.

But after all they both could but feel that things would seem more lonely now that he was gone, and before the carriage was fairly out of sight they almost wished that he was not going to leave them, and in spite of his mischief they could have forgiven him and taken him back again.

In due time the family arrived in New York, and Tommy Bounce was once more at home with the boys of his neighborhood, entertaining them with stories of what had happened him and the fun he had had during his summer vacation.

For the first few days Tommy behaved himself first rate, and his father being all taken up with his own business, almost forgot his threat of sending him away to school, although to tell the truth Tommy rather liked the idea of going. He thought he saw lots of fun in the racket.

But, of course, he could not long remain quiet. It would have killed him to do so, and as luck would have it, a good subject for fun soon presented itself in the shape of an old maid aunt, who came for a week's visit.

Aunt Huldah was a real type of an old maid, prim and crotchety, and although both Mr. Bounce and his wife did all in their power to make her visit a pleasant one, yet she was not happy, and mostly on account of Tommy.

The young rascal took a dislike to her from the first, quite as strong as she took to him, and he was continually watching for chances to play tricks on her.

And, of course, where there is a will there is a way for anything, good, bad or indifferent.

He was not long in finding out that she wore false teeth, and he often used to wish he could only manage to get possession of them, feeling certain that he could have some fun with them.

Chance favored him at last, for he contrived to get into her chamber while she was in the bathroom, and got possession of the teeth, finding them in a tumbler of water where she had placed them on going to bed the night before.

Now it so happened that a certain old widower was to call on her that forenoon and take her to a picture gallery, and she was bound to catch him if possible.

So she proceeded to get up an elaborate toilet for the purpose of making herself look as young and attractive as possible, but when she went for her hash-grinders they were nowhere to be found.

What did it mean?

"I wonder if I forgot to put them in the tumbler last night or if I've swallowed them?" she mused, looking wild and very much alarmed.

And then she began to feel of her stomach to see if she could conclude where the teeth had lodged.

"Golly, dat am de mos' drefful thing dat I eber knowed," mused Ebenezer, after he had heard all about it. "Mus' be dat she mistake 'em for a doughnut and gobble 'em down."

Meantime Aunt Huldah was creating a great sensation by attempting to denounce almost everybody for stealing her teeth.

And such a muss as she made of it, attempting to talk without having them in. It was enough to make a crow laugh, for she made a noise resembling what a person would make with his mouth full of hot pudding, while her chin and nose came very near together, and would have made a very good nut cracker.

Mr. and Mrs. Bounce were greatly exercised over the matter, but they never thought to suspect Tommy of having stolen them.

And while she was fretting and fussing the old fellow called and was shown into the parlor, to wait for her.

"Here, Tommy, glo glown an' tell Mr. Glinks lat I'm slick en' clan't glo," said she, addressing Tommy in a slobberly way.

"Lall light," replied Tommy, imitating the miserable old lady.

"Lone your slash," said she, frowning sullenly upon him.

Tommy laughed and went down into the parlor where Mr. Dinks was.

"I say," he began, "Aunt Huldah has lost her false teeth an' can't see yer till she gets some new ones."

"What is that you say, young man?" demanded Dinks in surprise.

"The ole gal's lost her hash chewers an' can't gum it over yer ter-day."

"Impossible. You cannot mean it."

"I'll take you up to see her."

"You will?"

"Yes; but I think she's dangerous."

"Why so?"

"Because any ole hen with her teeth in her stomach must be savage."

"What, has she—"

"Yes, I think she must have swallowed 'em," replied the young rascal.

This piece of news nearly staggered the old fellow, for until now he never had suspected that she wore false teeth, although he wore them himself.

It was a dangerous thought, for to suppose that they should get married and attempt to kiss each other—what a rattling of false teeth there would be!

But he had half a suspicion that Tommy was not telling the truth, and to make sure of it, he gave him a quarter.

"Now tell me all about it, sonny."

"Well, I was sorter gassin'. She's all right; she'll be down right away," said he, taking the quarter and skipping out.

Going upstairs to his Aunt Huldah, he said: "All right, ole gal, I told him that yer had the smallpox, an' he lit out like a scared sheep."

"Did he go?" she asked, anxiously.

"Yer bet."

"And did you tell him such a story?"

"Well, yer wanted him ter skip, didn't yer?" he asked, briskly.

"Certainly."

"Well, if I'd told him that you'd lost yer false potato mashers, yer wouldn't have liked that, would yer?"

"Oh, you horrid boy!"

"An' yer know he's clean gone on yer."

"Oh, you terrible child!"

"So I thought I'd see how much he'd get frightened about yer."

"Well, what did he say?"

"Say? Why, he said: 'Blank—blank—blank! I'm off like a green elder pop gun,' an' he lit out so fast that yer might have played a game of checkers on his coat tails—they stuck out so straight." And Tommy walked away, leaving his old maid aunt to reflect upon about how much Mr. Dinks loved her after all of her calculations about catching him.

But the more she thought about it the more indignant did she become, and as she did not care who else knew that she wore false teeth so long as Mr. Dinks did not, she finished her toilet as best she could and went downstairs, jawing and making a lively time generally.

Mr. Bounce had by this time gone downtown to business, and believing that Dinks had gone, she rushed into the reception-room, where he sat behind some deep window curtains.

He espied her and rushed to embrace her, at which she screamed like a stuck pig and tried to escape.

But he had caught her in his arms and was holding her tight, without any notion of allowing her to escape, thinking that her yelling was only a pretty little piece of girlish business on account of being hugged.

"Oh, my darling Huldah, I've got you now," said he, struggling to kiss her.

"Yaw—yaw—yaw!" was her reply, as she attempted to hide her face.

The strange noise surprised him, and he whirled her around so as to look in her face.

"Great Moses!" he exclaimed, seeing her sunken mouth and cheeks, and seizing his hat, he rushed from the house, muttering: "It's a darned sight wuss nor smallpox."

Huldah darted upstairs with murder in her heart and lightning in her eye. If she could only lay hands on that Tommy Bounce she wouldn't leave a hair on his head.

But Tommy had skipped out.

Then she sat down and had a good cry, while he was having a good laugh.

She couldn't eat without her teeth, and what should she do?

There was only one thing, and that was to go to a dentist and have another set made. But this would take her quite a long time, and what should she do in the meantime?

And the idea of going out of doors in such a plight! The thought of it almost drove her mad, although there was no help for it.

Tommy's mother, however, came to her assistance, and, ordering Ebenezer to have a carriage ready at a certain time, she took her to a celebrated dentist not far away, where she was measured for a new set of teeth.

Meantime Tommy was carrying the old ones around in his pocket and wondering what the dickens he should do with them.

Finally he went down into the kitchen, where Mrs. Crow was at work cooking, and although she made it a point to suspect and drive him away whenever he came where she was, yet on this occasion he looked so unusually honest and demure she could not believe that he was up to anything wrong.

Little George Washington Abraham Lincoln was at play with the house cat, even more innocent than the cat herself, and the worst his mother could anticipate was that Tommy would get him into some mischief.

"Tommy, you no business down heah in de kitchen. You mudder tolle yer neber ter come down heah, so yer better cl'ar out," said she, quietly.

"That's all right," said he.

"No, it arn't all right. Dar's George Washington Abraham Lincoln, jus' as good an 'peaceful as a kitten now, an' I'll bet a dollar dat yer'll hab him inter some sort of mischief in less dan five minutes."

"No, Mrs. Crow, I'm sick."

"Sick! Guess you play 'possum."

"No, honor bright; got ther belly-ache."

She looked at him sharply for a moment, and seeing that he was uncommonly sober, she was not sure but that he was telling the truth.

"Well, see dat you keep sick, dat's all. An' you, George Washington Abraham Lincoln, see dat you behabe yourself," said she, turning to her hopeful son.

"Yes, ma'am," he replied.

"An' keep 'way from Tommy Bounce."

"Yes, ma'am."

Tommy stood a moment watching her as she was preparing a big custard for the oven, and after it was all ready, and when her back was turned, he took his aunt's false teeth from his pocket and dropped them into the custard.

In a few minutes he had the satisfaction of seeing her place the dish in the oven to bake, and then he turned his attention to little George Washington Abraham Lincoln Crow.

The little coon was playing with the cat, and out in the back yard there was a pair of pet rabbits. Tommy got a piece of strong string and motioned the little darkey out into the yard.

In the course of five or ten minutes he had the hind leg of the cat tied to the hind leg of a rabbit, and let them go.

And then there was some fun—for Tommy and the cat, but not much for the poor rabbit, for finding itself tied in such a way, the cat turned upon the rabbit and scratched it nearly to death before the cook could cut them apart.

"Dar, now, didn't I tolle you?" yelled Mrs. Crow, "didn't I tolle yer dat yer shu' ter be in some mischief? Much belly-ache you got, you Tommy Bounce. Now I tolle you' farder ob dat caper."

"Well, I'm trainin' the cat for a hunter," replied Tommy, laughing.

"If I were you' mudder I'd train you."

"Goin' ter take her out ter hunt rabbits."

"Now you go right upstairs about you' business; an, you, George Washington Abraham Lincoln, you come right in de house heah, an' if you let me catch you playin' wid dat bad boy some mo' I peel de skin all off you' black bones!" she added, seizing her only son by the ear and leading him back into the kitchen.

But Tommy had accomplished all he wanted to, so without much reluctance he obeyed the cook, and vanished upstairs.

During the remainder of the day he made himself as happy

as he could in the street, getting up dog fights, cutting behind bob-tail cars and getting strangers on a string.

But you bet he was on hand when dinner time came, looking as sober and as honest as a clam, for at that time he expected to see the result of his job with the false teeth.

His Aunt Huldah was at the table, and looking a trifle more amiable than when he had seen her last, but both his father and mother, having been informed of the racket he had played upon Mr. Dinks, were looking particularly cloudy.

But Tommy never looked more innocent and honest in his life, and took his seat at the table like a nice little Sunday-school boy, although feeling all the while that he was in for another of those warmings which had made him sore so often.

The meal progressed, however, without much being said. As for his aunt, she had not yet got her teeth in, and could not say much if she had wanted to ever so bad.

The courses were gone through with as usual, Mr. Bounce waiting upon the table as was his custom, until finally he came to the custard pudding, which had been placed upon the table just as it came from the oven and in the same dish.

He went through with them all, and as luck would have it, Tommy's plate contained the false teeth.

He didn't feel half so much like eating the delicious pudding as he did like having a good laugh, so he held up the teeth on his spoon.

"I say, pop, what's this?"

They all looked at that curious object which he was holding up, and then his Aunt Huldah proceeded to squeal, fall back in her chair and yelled:

"Oh, my teeth—oh, my teeth!"

"Great heavens!"

"Goodness gracious!" exclaimed Mr. and Mrs. Bounce, shoving away from the table.

"My teeth—my teeth!" moaned Aunt Huldah.

"But—I—how in thunder came they in this custard pudding?" demanded Mr. Bounce, seizing the table bell.

Instantly Mrs. Crow appeared.

"What does this mean?" they both cried, pointing to the teeth.

Aunt Huldah made a dive for them, but Tommy pulled them away.

"Give me my teeth," she slobbered.

"What explanation have you to give?" demanded Mrs. Bounce.

"Fo' de Lord, missus, I dun gone don't know, I neber seed 'em afo'," said the cook, looking wild.

"But you must know. The idea that such a thing could possibly happen without your knowing something about it."

"Well, all I know is what I 'spect."

"And what do you suspect?"

"Well, Tommy war down dere in de kitchen when I war a makin' dat puddin' an' jus' now George Washington Abraham Lincoln, he say dat he seen him drop somefin inter de dish jes' afo' I put it in de oven," said she.

"Oh, that horrid boy!" screamed Aunt Huldah.

"That settles it," said Mr. Bounce, seeing through the whole trouble at once. "Come here, you young rascal," and he reached for Tommy.

But that hopeful youth was just quick enough to get out of the way. He started to run around behind his wrathful parent, who, on reaching around to catch him, fell backward, tipping over the table and spilling things everywhere and upon everybody around it.

The effort was too much for Tommy's father, and while the little rascal escaped, he went down amid the crash, and was well covered with pudding and various kinds of sauce.

But Tommy didn't get out with all the fun he anticipated, unless he called it fun to lay over his father's knee for about fifteen minutes, and not to be able to sit down for the next week.

This, however, settled his hash, for the next day his mother began to pack up a trunk with his clothing, while his father

was making arrangements with a well-known keeper of a strict boarding school not far away.

CHAPTER VII.

Tommy Bounce was in for it now, and no mistake. His father had made up his mind that he should play no more of his pranks at home, and so arranged for him to be taken as a pupil at Professor Slam's boarding school, a private academy situated at a village on the Hudson river, about twenty miles from New York.

"Now, young man, if you cut up any of your shines at school, you will get such a whaling that you will be crippled for life," said his father as Tommy was on the point of starting on his journey.

"Get it hotter'n I do home?" asked Tommy, looking up mournfully.

"You bet you will. I have told Professor Slam all about what a bad boy you are, and have given him liberty to correct you as he thinks best, so if you value your hide and bones, you will be a better boy than you have been heretofore."

"All right."

"Well, I hope it will be. Good-bye," shaking him by the hand, for, to tell the truth, he felt sorry for what he had said, knowing very well that it was only partially true.

"Good-bye, pop; be good to yourself," the little rascal replied, and as his father took his hand for a good-bye shake he turned away to hide a smile.

And as he went downtown to business his mind reverted to the very day when he was of Tommy's age and started for Andover to school, just as his son was now doing.

"I'm afraid he's too much like me to be choked out of mischief, but I guess it is the best thing I can do with him, for he certainly cannot learn so much deviltry in a little country village as he would in New York," mused Mr. Bounce as he rode along.

Then his mother took him in hand.

"Now, Tommy, I have packed your trunk full of everything you need. Here is some pocket money for you, and whenever you want more, write to me and I will send it."

"Oh, you're a bully mamma."

"And I want you to be a very good boy and write to me every week."

"You bet I will," said Tommy, thinking of the pocket money at the same time.

"See if you cannot be the best boy in the school, and if you are, when you come home for the holidays, I will load you down with presents."

"Oh, mamma, I'll be the boss good boy in the school, you bet I will."

"So I hope. Now the carriage will be at the door in an hour, and I will go to the depot with you," said she, leaving him.

"Oh, no, perhaps not!" he mused as he counted the money his mother had given him and found it to be five dollars. "Guess I can be a goody good boy if I'm paid well for it. Wonder what sort of a gang there is up there?"

Just then little George Washington Abraham Lincoln came in, sniffling.

"What's ther matter, Coony?"

"Pop says you's goin' 'way, an' he's glad of it," he blubbered.

"Oh, he is, hey? All right for yer pop."

"Bean't you comin' back no mo'?"

"No. Want ter go with me?"

"Yes," said the little darkey, eagerly, for in spite of the tricks which Tommy played upon him so often he was greatly attached to him and couldn't bear the thought of separation.

"All right. Get right inter my trunk here, and I'll lock yer up so nobody will know that yer going. Will yer?"

Tommy went to an empty packing trunk that stood in the room where his own trunk was and lifted the lid.

"Yes, I will," said the little nig.

"All right. Jump in and I'll take yer with me all right and let nobody know it. Now, yer lay right down on ther bottom, and keep just as quiet as a mouse. If anybody calls yer before we go, don't say a word."

"I won't, Tommy," said the little fellow as he nestled down on the bottom.

It was a big trunk and afforded him a plenty of breathing space and room to turn around as much as he liked.

Tommy shut down the cover and turned the key without removing it. His object was to play a joke on Ebenezer.

He had scarcely locked it, however, before that charcoal-colored individual made his appearance.

"Am you all ready, Tommy?" he asked.

"All ready."

"Now, Tommy, I'se got de feelings ob a farder, an' I wants ter gib yer some good advice."

"Oh, yer do, eh? Glad I'm goin', though, aren't yer?"

"No, Tommy, I'se been weepin' nights 'bout you gwine away. Indeed I hab."

"Get out; yer little coon just told me that yer said yer was glad I was going."

"Fo' de Lord, Tommy, I broke de back ob dat little chunk of charcoal, I will, fo' I hab de feelin's ob a farder."

"Well, that is a little fatherly, come ter think of it," remarked Tommy, laughing.

"No, Tommy, I'se feelin' berry sorry an' solemn 'bout you gwine away; I 'bout as libs lose my own chile, shuah. But I hab der feelings ob a farder, an' I wants ter gib yer some good advice."

"What about?"

"Bout behavin' yourself. Tommy—Tommy, you know dat you am as full ob de debil as a goose egg am full ob milk. Now I hopes dat you will be a good boy, now dat you am a-gwine 'way ter college. Don't cut up any mo' monkey shines, an' you may lib ter be de President ob de 'Nited States."

"Oh, I'se going ter be awful good."

"Dat's right, an' all ob you folks will be proud ob you."

Just then Mrs. Crow entered.

"Whar' am George Washington Abraham Lincoln?" she asked, looking around.

"I'm shuah I don't know, honey. Guess he am in de street," replied Ebenezer.

"I broke ebery bone in his body if he am out ob dis house! Tommy, I'se jus' awful glad dat you am gwine away. We'll hab some peace in de house now, an' as fo' George Washington Abraham Lincoln, he will be a good boy, now dat you go 'way."

"Think so, ole gal?"

"I'se shuah ob it. You hab put mo' debility in dat chile's head dan he would eber hab in all his life if he had neber seen you."

"All right."

"Honey, don't be hard on de boy, fo' he am gwine 'way from us," said Ebenezer.

"An' I'se mighty glad ob it, same's ebery one else is. Hope he'll stay 'way ten yea'."

"That's all right, ole gal; I'll write ter yer once in a while."

"Needn't write ter me; I don't want ter heah from you," she said, flaunting out of the room.

"Don't mind her, Tommy; she's mad 'cos she can't fin' de kid. Now I go an' hitch up de hosses," said he, leaving the room.

Tommy enjoyed a little laugh all by himself, and then going to the packing trunk, he unlocked it and lifted the lid.

"It's all right, little Crow; keep mum."

"War mammy looking fo' me?" he asked, raising up.

"Yes, but she will never tumble ter the racket if yer only keep still. Hark! that's her calling for yer," said he, reclosing the trunk and locking it up as before.

Then he began moving about from room to room, in a half regretful sort of way, as if saying good-bye to the hundreds of familiar objects with which he had been associated ever since

he could remember, during which he encountered Mrs. Crow several times, looking and calling for her lost George Washington Abraham Lincoln.

"I broke him all ter pieces," he heard her mutter several times as she proceeded with her fruitless search.

Presently, however, the coach was driven up to the door, his trunk placed upon it and his mother appeared, dressed for a ride to the depot with him. Tommy shook hands with Mrs. Crow; hoped that she would find her son and that he would be a much better boy thereafter, and then leaping into the carriage by the side of his mother, was driven to the depot.

The parting between mother and son was very feeling, and Tommy himself felt somewhat leaky about the eyes as she kissed him good-bye.

"Now I am sure you will be a good boy and bring me home a first-class report," said she.

"Of course I will" (if I get into the first class), thought the little rogue.

"Good-bye, Tommy. Be a good boy an' min' what your mudder tolle you; also what I tolle yer fo' you know dat I hab der feelings ob a farder," said Ebenezer, offering his big hand.

"That's all right, Eben-Squeezee, I'll be so good that wings 'll grow on me. Give my love ter ther little Crow when yer find him," replied Tommy, smiling.

"Oh, he'll feel drefful bad 'cos he war not dar ter bid you good-bye," said Eben.

"I s'pose so. Well, good-bye."

With his mother's farewell kiss he sprang upon the train that was now all ready to start, and moved slowly out of the depot.

It would be unnatural if he did not feel a trifle tearful under the circumstances; but he soon forgot all thoughts of sentiment and home as he began to spin through the country, and gradually a smile stole over his face as he thought of George Washington Abraham Lincoln.

In truth, he did not imagine it half so comical as it really turned out to be, for when Ebenezer returned he found his wife in the greatest state of excitement, not yet having succeeded in finding her son.

She had searched for him high and low, but all to no purpose. The little coon was lying low and keeping "dark," of course, although he began to feel a trifle uneasy and to wonder when Tomimy was going to start.

Finally, after becoming almost wild and distracted over his continued absence, they heard a kicking inside the trunk.

"Fo' de Lord, what's dat?" asked Ebenezer, starting up.

"Go see," said his wife in a whisper.

"No, I'se 'fraid it am a warnin'."

"An' I'se 'fraid dat I'se married to a fool," said she, savagely, and going to the trunk she unlocked it and then threw open the cover.

The little coon started up as his parents started back.

"Whar am Tommy?" he asked, looking anxiously around.

"How come you dar?" they both asked.

The explanation was reluctantly given, and not until the kid had made sure that Tommy had gone and left him behind, and that he had played a trick on him.

Then the joke was finished up with a double spanking, each of which was quite enough for him to remember.

"Thank de Lord dat Tommy Bounce hab gone away," said Mrs. Crow. "I feel all de while dat he hab done something wid de boy. I'se glad dat de little rascal hab gone, an' I hope he neber come back."

"Amen!" moaned Ebenezer as he went about his work, hoping for peace and quiet in the future.

Tommy Bounce reached his destination and was soon in the hands of Professor Slam, a lean, lank old rooster, about fifty years of age and homely as a whitewashed hen-coop.

"Master Bounce, your father informs me that you want careful looking after. I would have you know at the start that I am a careful looker after my boys. The janitor will show you to your room, and give you your necessary instructions, but

bear in mind, Master Bounce, that I am very strict regarding the deportment of my scholars, and that my wrath falls upon all evil-doers. To-morrow I shall expect to see you in the school-room."

Tommy bowed, and in a dazed sort of a way followed the janitor to his room.

This janitor's name was Elam Lamb, and Tommy thought at once what a dumb lot of fellows there must be at that school if they didn't have lots of fun with him, for he was a comical character. He was a tall, raw-boned Yankee, and always had a grin on his face, whether he was pleased or not. In fact, there was no telling whether he was your friend or enemy if you judged by the expression of his face.

"Young man, this is your room," said he, leading him into a little 7x9, whither his trunk had already been taken; "and you are expected to keep it neat and clean. It will be examined at the end of every week, and if there is any mark or damage done, it will be charged to your parents."

"That's all right; they can stand it," said Tommy, throwing his hat and satchel upon the bed.

"You must be very careful, for Professor Slam is a terrible bad man with bad boys."

"All right; I'm a terrible good boy."

"I hope so, for your sake. Supper is over, but the bell will waken you for breakfast," said Lamb, setting down a little piece of candle in a tin candlestick and going away.

To tell the truth, things didn't look very rosy or homelike, and Tommy felt anything but cheerful in his new abode. Everything was of the plainest and most durable kind, and there was a look of cold isolation about the whole place.

As yet he had seen but two or three boys belonging to the school—young fellows about his own size—and he didn't think they amounted to much. In short, he began to feel homesick and to wish himself back again. Everything about the place was so still, and the village was so different from New York that he could almost feel the silence.

Finally he closed his door and went to bed, being tired, hoping that things would look a little brighter and more homelike in the morning, for unless they did, he made up his mind that he would run away.

What he wanted was companionship, and, so far as he could see, there was nothing resembling it at that school. But after fretting an hour or so he finally fell asleep.

Tommy didn't know where he was.

The building in which his room was located was detached from the school building and contained about fifty rooms, double and single, in which the pupils of Professor Slam's school slept, the dining-hall being still another building, a few rods away.

No, Tommy Bounce didn't know where he was. He hadn't seen many of the boys, and had but a vague idea of what the school really was. But he was destined to find out before long.

About midnight a couple dozen of lads in their nightgowns might have been seen filing through the hall on which Tommy's room was situated. The light of one or two candles killed a portion of the darkness.

They halted before Tommy's door and silently opened it.

Then Tommy was suddenly awakened by a squirt of cold water.

He sat quickly up in bed and looked around, but nobody was to be seen, although there was no mistaking the fact that he was wet, and pretty well wet, too.

He listened, but not a sound broke upon the stillness, and he finally came to the conclusion that the roof of the building leaked, and that there was a storm outside, although he could not hear any indications of it.

Finally he fell off into another doze, when he was awakened by another movement in the room, and on looking up he saw his room full of white spectres, with hoods having eye-holes.

"Wa-wa—" cried Tommy, really frightened at the strange and ghostly scene.

Then the boys chanted a low and solemn dirge, all the while visible only by the poor flicker of one little bit of candle.

Tommy's hair stood on end.

Was the place haunted?

The boys did their business so well that he was almost paralyzed. He tried to move, but fear restrained him.

"Youthful mortal," said the leader of the gang, "you have been betrayed into the realm of shades and must take the consequences. Away with him!"

Then six or eight of the strongest of the gang seized the corners of the blanket on which he lay, and lifted him from his bed.

"Away with him!"

"Yes, away to the realm of shades!"

Tommy was so frightened that he had not the power of moving or resistance.

"Hush!" spoke first one and then another.

"Hush!" hissed one of them in Tommy's ear; "one word, and your mortal remains will be given to the crows and birds of the air."

"Oh, please don't!" moaned Tommy.

"Silence!" they whispered, as they moved out into the hall.

Tommy was too much frightened to protest any further, and the fellows who had him in the blanket bore him along silently to the head of the stairs.

Then as quietly they bore him down the stairs and out into the open air.

It was so dark that a person could not see his hand before him, and, oh, so still!

Tommy dared not cry out.

Slowly the procession moved out upon the playground, and just as they reached it, a night owl screamed loud and fierce enough to startle the dead.

Arriving in the centre of the playground, they halted.

"Shades!" said the leader, "before we consign our victim to his long home, let us give him one more sensation that exists between the present and the dread hereafter."

"We will," was the response.

Those having the corners of the blanket tightened their grasps.

"One! Two! Three!"

"Up!"

With this they threw him up from the blanket about ten feet, causing him the most curious sensations he ever experienced; and as he came down, they caught him again, and once more he was thrown upward, even higher than before.

Tommy was all grit, but such an experience as this made him bellow in spite of himself, for they continued the racket for some time, seemingly throwing him higher and higher every time, and catching him as he came down.

Finally they appeared to grow weary of the fun.

"Away with him to the purifying bath!"

At this command they caught the corners of the blanket and drew them together.

Quickly and silently they drew them together and tied them, just as you would the corners of a handkerchief in which you had something of value.

Then they ran a pole through the knot of the bundle; they raised it to their shoulders, and marched away.

You can well imagine Tommy's feelings.

Going to a big pump, they placed him under the spout.

"Let the purifying element come forth!" cried the leader; and two or three of the "spectres" seized the handle of the pump, and a copious stream of cold water spurted out upon the victim.

Tommy howled, but all to no purpose; for chanting another weird hymn, they continued to pump until he was thoroughly drenched.

"Leave him for the ghosts of darkness!" cried the leader; and the flow of water stopped.

Then there was silence. Poor Tommy, half drowned and

half frightened to death, was left alone, and the "hazers" silently retired to their own rooms.

Scarcely knowing whether he was dead or alive, and chilled to the marrow of his bones, Tommy was a long time in coming to himself, and even when he did, he found that he was unable to move, so tightly had the blanket been tied.

And thus he had to lie until morning, when the first person to discover the strange bundle under the pump was Hop Ski, the Chinese laundryman attached to the school.

CHAPTER VIII.

At first Hop Ski, the Chinese laundryman attached to Professor Slam's school, was puzzled to make out what the big bundle under the pump contained, but the reader, of course, knows that the bundle was mostly made up of Tommy Bounce, whom the boys of the school had "hazed" the night before, leaving him under the spout of the pump, thoroughly wet, after having taken him from his room in the blanket of his bed, and put him through a course of ghostly sprouts, each one of the boys being in his night shirt and acting the part of ghost.

"Washee—washee," mused Hop Ski, as he approached the bundle; "funny place flor washee. Guess Lambee plut sloak," he added, approaching it.

Tommy heard him, but being still uncertain whether he was in the land of the living or the dead, he remained quiet.

"Elerry funny," he mused, as he proceeded to untie the shrunken knots in the blanket; "play glames on Chinaman; s'pose Melican man berry smart, but me heap all hunky doly," he added, finally untying the knot.

Tommy Bounce at once bounced out, and Hop Ski hopped backward about ten feet, with protruding eyes.

"Goshee dunder!" he exclaimed.

"Where am I?" asked Tommy, faintly.

"Who be?" demanded the Chinaman.

"Who did it?" Tommy asked, getting upon his feet and looking around.

He was cold and stiff, and his teeth were chattering as he spoke.

"Gib lup," said Hop Ski, still regarding Tommy with wonder and suspicion.

"Who be you?"

"Hop Ski."

"Well, what do you do?"

"Me washee-washee flor boys."

"Oh, yer do, hey!"

"How come?"

"Don't know."

"Hip—who!" he shouted, looking toward the dormitory.

"What's the matter?" asked Tommy.

"Gib lup," said the Chinaman, still keeping at a respectful distance from him, and again he shouted, "Hip—who!"

Then Elam Lamb put in an appearance. As head janitor he demanded to know what this early row was all about, and why the laundryman had aroused him from slumber.

"Slee?" he asked, pointing to poor shivering Tommy Bounce.

"Halloo! what's this?" asked Lamb.

"Me."

"Well, who's me?"

"Tommy Bounce."

"What, the new scholar that arrived last night?"

"Yes."

"But what are you doing here?"

"Shaking."

"What for?"

"Because I'm wet and cold."

"How came you so?"

"I give the most of it up."

"What do you mean?"

Tommy related his experience.

"So—so, the boys have been hazing you. I understand it," said Lamb, while Hop Ski grinned all over the front side of his head.

"Muchee flun. Bully bloys!" said he.

"Is that the way they work a fresh?" asked Tommy, after a moment's reflection.

"I am sorry to say that this is one of the ways. But never fear, Master Bounce, I shall report the case to Mr. Slam, and they will all be severely punished."

"Oh, don't mind on my account," said Tommy.

"No?" asked the janitor in surprise.

"No; I guess I can work it out for myself."

"What do you mean?"

"They have had their little racket, and it was a good one, I own up, but I guess I can manage to get square with them somehow."

"No, sir, never. We do not allow such things here—no, sir."

"What?"

"No scholar is allowed to get square, as you call it, at Mr. Slam's school. Go to your room; I will attend to the rest," said Mr. Lamb, severely.

"I think I'd like a little 'rest' myself."

"Well, go and get what you want. But be careful and not soil the paint, for if you do it will be charged to your parents."

"All right," muttered Tommy.

"Hop Ski, take that blanket to the wash," said Lamb, authoritatively.

"Me do alle samee. Bloss bloys! Chuckee full flun; tee-hee—hee!" said the Chinaman, proceeding to obey orders.

Tommy followed him toward the house.

"Heap cussie good. Bloys soakee fleshman."

"That's all right, Mr. Ski-terrier; I can stand soaking and never melt. But this isn't the only day there is," replied Tommy.

"Betta lookie lout. Bloys play debil some mo' alle samebly time."

"That's all right," and Tommy entered the dormitory.

But in spite of the pluck he manifested, he felt lame, sore and sick. It was the roughest experience he had yet undergone, and it took him some time to collect his scattered senses.

"Oh, I take a tumble; I lop over. I thought this was an awful dull place, but I find there's lots of fun here; I know I shall like this gang tip-top. They must all be toughs."

After thinking the matter over for a short time, he proceeded to change his clothing and to get into some that was dry, so that by the time the rising bell rang he was fixed up and looking as bright as a new pin.

Finally the breakfast bell rang, and he marched into the dining-hall, where the janitor showed him his future seat at the table, and then the other boys marched in, looking as honest as so many spring lambs.

They scarcely noticed Tommy, and had he been less a rogue himself, he never could have found it in his heart to suspect that even one of them had anything to do with the hazing that had made him such a victim.

But he watched them narrowly while not appearing to do so, and was not long in making up his mind who the leader of the mischief was, a good-looking fellow about fifteen years of age, named Billy Gault.

Breakfast over, they all marched into the school-room, where old Slam read a chapter in the Bible and droned through a prayer, after which they were dismissed for study, being obliged to have their lessons perfect by nine o'clock, when they were again summoned to the school-room.

On the way back to the dormitory, Tommy could not mistake the laughter that was given at his expense, or the hints about ghosts and being tossed in a blanket, water-cure, etc.

But he made no reply. He simply smiled good-naturedly,

as much as to say, "I know it, boys, I was there. It was devilish good fun—fun for you—but wait awhile."

Tommy went to his studies, but all the while he could not help wishing that he was in Billy Gault's place, the leader of the school. That became his ambition from that time forward.

Elam Lamb, the janitor, reported the hazing to Professor Slam, but that worthy had had experience enough of that sort to know that he could never find out the guilty parties, and so he said nothing about it.

With the exception of the laughing and the sly hits that he received during the day, nothing happened of any importance until school was out that afternoon, when the boys all assembled on the play-ground as usual, Tommy among the others.

But here it was soon evident that the boys were bound to have their laugh out, and the result was that Tommy became the centre of attraction.

They laughed and rigged him for a long time, and asked him what he thought of the school; of midnight ghosts and pump water.

"Oh, that's all right, fellows. I own up; but of course you won't mind if a fellow gets square with you?" said Tommy.

"Oh, hitch up," said one of the boys.

"Who are you going to get square with?" asked Billy Gault, swaggering up to Tommy and poking his face close to his.

"With all of you—with your boss boy, if you like. Who is he, hey, what der yer say?"

"I'm the boss boy," replied Billy, giving him a sharp smack on the side of his face with his open hand.

The boys gave a cheer, and in an instant there was just as lively a fight going on between Tommy and Billy Gault as was ever seen.

The crowd gathered around in a ring to see it out, expecting of course that Tommy would get polished off in about half a minute.

But Tommy wasn't that sort of a cat. He didn't take polish half so easily as they thought he would. On the contrary, he soon got the best of his antagonist, and kept it like the game little rooster that he was, causing the utmost excitement among the boys, who saw the downfall of their leader with wonder and regret.

Like two game chickens they fought, but Tommy came out victorious, although just then he was not received with any applause, for fully one half of the boys were inclined to jump in and thrash the conqueror of their leader, and probably would have done so had not Janitor Lamb put in a sudden appearance just then and broken up the fight—after it was all over.

"Well, Billy, you found your match at last, have you?" he asked. "Guess you don't want to haze him any more; but if I catch any of you young rascals fighting again, I'll step on every one of you," he added, turning away with a grin on his face.

"Want to slap my face again?" asked Tommy, allowing Billy to get up.

"Yes, I will," and at it they went again.

But the last one was a short one, for Tommy put in a settler and sent Billy to grass.

That settled it, and Billy was led away by two of his friends to the pump, leaving Tommy cock of the walk, boss boy, and leader of the school.

Several of the bolder boys gathered around him and congratulated him.

"That's all right, fellows. I'm no slouch; I didn't mind the racket you gave me last night, for you bet I'll be all ready to give it to the next new fellow that comes. But I don't like to have a fellow slap me in the jaw."

"Bully for you!" was the response, and so it was settled.

Tommy Bounce had achieved his ambition sooner than he expected, although not without a tough little fight. And of course from that moment, after thrashing the bully of the school, he never lacked friends. In fact, Billy himself soon

made up with him, and together they led the school in all sports and mischief.

At the end of the first month Tommy was indisputably the boss boy, for being original and fertile in his plans for amusement, there was no lack of fun, as there often used to be before his advent, consequently everything was lovely.

Professor Slam was a sort of an old fuss and feathers, giving the boys any quantity of threatenings and warnings, but seldom flogging them, being too lazy to do so, unless he got very mad, while Elam Lamb was very unpopular, and forever worrying the boys and contriving to break up their sport.

Mr. Slam was a believer in athletic sports of all kinds, and soon after Tommy became a member of his school, at his solicitation, he allowed them to have a football. They had one a year or so before, but old Lamb had contrived to have it destroyed, out of pure cussedness, and simply because the boys had so much fun with it.

When he consulted with Slam about allowing them to have this one, the old man clenched the argument by saying that it would probably keep them out of mischief, and so the ball was bought.

And what fun they used to have choosing sides, and kicking it; and how much delight they took in getting up a "rush" whenever old Lamb happened to cross the playground; to gather around him, kick the ball against him, or kick his shins while pretending to be after the ball. Oh, it was great fun—for the boys.

But one afternoon that football got them into trouble and came to grief.

They were kicking it around the playground and finally rushed it up toward the house. Here a rattling contest took place, until finally Tommy gave it a tremendous kick which sent it through the window of Mr. Slam's study, smashing a large pane of glass and carroming on the old man's head, causing him to yell like a frightened bull, as he tumbled over upon the floor.

The boys stood almost paralyzed under the window, consulting in whispers.

Mr. Slam was not consulting or talking in whispers; on the contrary, he was picking himself up and doing some of the most energetic swearing of which the English language is capable.

Seizing his hat and banging it over his head, he picked up that football and started out of the house with blood in his eye.

Some of the boys caught a glimpse of his coming and lit out.

"Who kicked this ball through that window?" he demanded, savagely, coming suddenly upon them.

"I did," replied Tommy, manfully.

"What! have you the audacity to acknowledge it?"

"Yes, sir."

The old man was nonplussed. In all his experience he had never met with so much blunt honesty.

"It was an accident, sir, and I will pay for it," said he.

"Pay for it! Pay thunder! Who is to pay me for the bang I got in the head?" he thundered.

"Excuse us, sir," said several others. "It was wholly unintentional."

"Go to grass, all of you! I'll kick this cussed ball over the moon, I—I—" and poising it with vengeance in his eye, he started to give it a kick that was intended either to burst it or kick it out of sight.

But his madness got the best of him. He didn't hit the ball, and the force of his kick threw both of his legs out from under him, and the next instant he landed on his head.

The boys laughed outright in spite of themselves at this unexpected acrobatic performance.

Tommy and another boy ran to help the old fellow up, scarcely daring to believe that he had not broken his neck.

"Did you hurt yourself, Mr. Slam?" asked Tommy, anxiously.

"Too bad," said the others, gathering around, although it was all they could do to keep their faces straight.

"Oh—oh—oh!" moaned the professor, as he struggled to his feet.

"Are you hurt, sir?"

"Hurt!" he exclaimed, and then, catching sight of the football again, it roused his anger higher than ever. "Get out of the way! Let me at it!" he screamed, hoarse with rage and red in the face. "I'll—I'll——"

Breaking away from the boys, he ran toward that innocent football, determined to crush it into the earth.

Springing about a yard into the air, he came down upon the ball.

But he didn't crush it much. On the contrary, it shot out from under him and again did his big feet go dangling up in the air, while his head, coming in contact with the earth, was driven into his plug hat out of sight.

This time the boys roared with all their might, for he could not see them, and while he lay there struggling and floundering about, and using bad words enough to stock a private ship, several of them squared their old grudges by giving him a few smart kicks.

But the uproar brought Elam Lamb to the spot to find out what it was all about, and there he found his wrathful employer floundering about in the most unaccountable manner.

"What's the trouble here?" he demanded.

"Mr. Slam has got a fit," said Billy Gault.

"Yes, and a mighty close fit, too," added Tommy.

"Dear me—dear me!" said the janitor, as he heard the terrible words the professor was using.

"Cut his hat off!" suggested Tommy, pointing to the dicer with which the old man was struggling.

Quick as thought, Elam whipped out his knife and went for that cady, but in cutting it so as to set the old man free, he gave his ear a slash that nearly cut it off.

Once more the old man was free and on his pins, but if he had said cuss words before, he threw them into the shade now. He rammed, jammed and slammed everybody and everything all up into little knots, especially Elam, who stood utterly confounded.

"You big-footed, overgrown idiot, you have cut my ear off!" he roared, making a strike at the unhappy janitor.

"No, sir; it is only——"

"Go to thunder! Go shoot yourself! Go and chase yourself around the grounds with a club! Get out of my sight!" and holding his hand upon his ear as though expecting it would otherwise drop off, he made his way into the house.

"What's up, anyway?" asked Elam.

"I should think you was up."

"Yes, blown up, high," suggested Tommy.

"But how did it happen?"

"Oh, he was out playing football with us and having some fun."

"I should say so. But I guess you boys had all the fun yourselves."

This produced another chorus of laughter, amid which the youngsters scattered about the playground. But they took pains to hide that football, for it was undoubtedly doomed as a source of amusement to them thereafter.

And all that afternoon it furnished them with fun, talking it over, and Tommy Bounce put a new feather in his cap by giving a full account of the comical affair and acting it out in the most laughable manner.

As for the janitor, he was greatly troubled at what he had seen and heard, for never before, since he had known Mr. Slam, had he heard him say anything worse than "darn," and had always considered him a modest man and a church member. It was simply awful!

Meantime he became very anxious to learn how much of the old fellow's ear he had whittled off, although he hadn't the courage to go into the house to ask about it, and finally sauntered off into the garden.

Tommy noticed this, of course, for he saw from the first that Elam was very much frightened.

"Fellows, here's some more fun," said he, beckoning them around him. "Here, Eugene, you go down and tell old Lamb that Mr. Slam wants to see him right away."

"All right," replied the little fellow, starting away.

"Now let's go up near the house and see how his nibs takes it."

"Bully!" they all cried, and away they went, keeping behind the hedge so as not to attract attention.

In a few moments Elam came up from the garden, looking anxious and unhappy.

Proceeding directly to Mr. Slam's study, he found the old man with his head tied up and his face still red as a rooster's comb.

"Did you send for me, sir?"

"No, get out, you infernal old ass. Get!" and seizing a big inkstand he hurled it at the head of the paralyzed janitor.

It missed its mark, but nevertheless it left its mark in the shape of a big slap of ink over his face.

He rushed out of the house, his big white eyes sticking out of his blackened face like door-knobs, making him look like a frightened devil.

The boys sent up a shout that might have been heard a mile away, and then Elam took a tumble; then he got mad.

He shook his fist in the direction of where the boys were hiding, and then proceeded to the pump to wash his sorry-looking mug.

"Confound these young rascals, they put up this job on me just to see the fun, but I'll give them all the fun they want before I have finished paying them for this, or my name isn't Elam Lamb," he muttered.

But while he muttered and washed, the boys gathered around him, laughing.

"Get out of this, confound you, or I'll——" and seizing a stone, he hurled it savagely into their midst.

But that was a game that they could all play at quite as well as he could, and in less than half a minute there was such a shower of stones falling on and about him that he was glad to beat a retreat.

CHAPTER IX.

It took Mr. Slam nearly a week to get over his mad and have his ear heal, the one that the janitor had nearly severed from his head while trying to assist him out of a plug hat and a difficulty into which he had fallen, head first.

But it took Lamb longer than that before he could even look as though he had forgotten or forgiven the racket which Tommy Bounce played at his expense, wherein he received the contents of an ink-bottle full in his pretty face from the hands of his indignant employer.

Professor Slam did not show up in the school-room again for a week, keeping himself hidden from everybody but the doctor and his housekeeper, during which time his duties were assumed by another teacher, and the boys had good times.

Elam Lamb, the janitor aforesaid, was all the while trembling in his big boots, for a discharge was the least thing he expected under the circumstances.

But he nursed his wrath toward the boys, and for Tommy Bounce in particular, vowing a big swear all to himself that he would yet get even with them all, and that Tommy would certainly have to be taken to a hospital for repairs after he got through with him.

And of course the boys knew that the whole thing would be given away by Elam, and what the result would be when the old professor should show up again they could only guess, but concluded that it would be a lively one.

They also felt convinced that if ever Elam did get a chance to buzz the old man, that he would put the worst construction possible upon the affair for the scholars, and the best for himself.

And as they had always known that he was no friend of theirs, they naturally expected only open warfare from him now.

Thus matters stood for a week. The janitor avoided the boys as much as possible, and as Mr. Slam was not visible, peace reigned in and around the school.

But of course the boys could not give up their fun, night or day, and it so happened that a new scholar came to the school that week, and they had the pleasure of hazing him, just as they had hazed Tommy Bounce.

This, together with what amusement they could pick up with Hop Ski, the boss of the laundry, managed to tide them through the week so that none of them got so dull as to be sick.

And yet it must not be supposed for a moment that there was nothing but deviltry going on in Mr. Slam's school, for, on the contrary, there was a great deal of studying done, and a large number of bright scholars, only they, boy-like, mixed in quite considerable fun and mischief with their work.

Speaking of the Chinaman, Hop Ski, he didn't have a very exalted opinion of these "Melican" lads. They were so full of deviltry, and so different from Chinese boys, that he could not understand them.

But they were continually giving him nice sharp lessons regarding their style, but which he was unthankful enough not to appreciate.

But of all the boys in school whom he disliked, Tommy Bounce took the cake. And yet whenever he was playing tricks on somebody else beside him, he would laugh and dance in his little wooden shoes and enjoy it hugely.

"Chuckee ful' debel like eggee," he would say, but then he would immediately afterward look serious and agree with the janitor, who always had a bad word for Master Bounce.

He even went so far as to encourage him in cutting the rope of one of the swings on the playground, so that when a boy got into it, it would break and give him a dangerous fall, hoping, of course, that Tommy would catch it.

But it so happened that Ned Field was the boy who came to grief by it, and the fall hurt him so badly that he was confined to his room for several days.

The boys suspected who the culprit was, and so, without saying anything that might reach his ears, they quietly watched for an opportunity to get good and hunk with him.

In the meantime Professor Slam had made his appearance in the school-room, the only evidence of his mishap being a few strips of court plaster on his left ear.

But not a word did he say regarding the transaction. One might well have believed from his actions that he had simply been laid up with a cold, and that nothing more serious had happened.

He resumed his duties, but there was a sad, far-away look in his eyes that was comical to behold, that is, for any one who knew the circumstances. He had evidently thought the matter all over during his seclusion, and what a fool and a show he had made of himself in the presence of his pupils by losing his temper and using such a string of bad words, and concluded that he was alone to blame, and that the least said about it the better it would be for him.

And the boys were right glad to see him once more, for they had enjoyed oceans of laughter over the matter—in fact, had got tired of the subject, and seeing that he was disposed to let it drop, they felt friendly to him.

As for Elam Lamb, he was almost beside himself with delight on account of not being bounced, and in a very short time he began again to put on airs and to lord it over the boys. But this being as it had always been, they took but little notice of him, further than to keep a sharp watch over his actions.

But Hop Ski had to be attended to first. Every boy in school was indignant on account of Ned Field's getting hurt, and every one of them stood ready to avenge him; Tommy Bounce was not only the recognized leader, but he was dead in earnest against the Chinaman.

They laid for him one night when they learned that he had gone to the village for something, and on his return, it being a little after dark, they fell upon him, bound and gagged him, after which they ran him down to the pump.

He had been to the village for a bucket of soft soap, and this they took away from him. After placing him under the nose of the pump, three or four of them seized the handle and began to pump a big stream of water on him, while two or three others rubbed him with the soft soap.

He would doubtless have yelled bloody murder in both Chinese and English, and also in broken English and broken Chinese, had he not been so effectually gagged, but as it was, there was nothing he could do but grin and bear it.

"How's that for washee-washee?" asked Tommy.

"How's that for soft soap?" asked Billy Gault, giving him a slap of it in the mouth.

But all that Hop Ski could do was to think damie just as fast as possible.

"Give it to him!" said others. "We'll teach him to cut ropes."

"That'll do. Now fetch him along," said Tommy.

The flood of water stopped, and they lifted the poor devil to his feet. Without stopping to rinse off the soap suds, they ran him out to the playground, where they had prepared another treat for him in the shape of a rope.

"Shall we hang him?"

Instantly Hop Ski fell upon his knees in a most supplicating manner and mutely begged them to spare his life, which occasioned a hearty laugh.

"Oh, we won't kill you," said Billy.

"No, but we'll be sure to hang you with a rope that hasn't been cut," added Tommy.

While this conversation was going on, a rope, going over the cross-beams of one of the swings—the very one, indeed, that he had cut—having a hook on one end of it, was brought down and the hook made fast in the seat of the Chinaman's trousers.

"Up with him, lads!" whispered Tommy, and fifty willing hands caught the other end of the rope and pulled Hop Ski skyward about ten feet, where he dangled and kicked like a crab on a fishline.

"Now, then, old rat-eater, good-night and pleasant dreams," said Tommy.

"And don't forget to dream of Ned Field," said Billy, and away they went, leaving him dangling there with plenty of time to ponder on the ways of "Melican" boys, and the decisive way they have of righting wrongs.

On arriving at the dormitory door they found old Elam there waiting for them with a whip, and he either gave or tried to give each one of them a slash with it as they darted past him, for they had disobeyed the rules of the school in being out after the last bell had rung, and so he took it upon himself to punish them for it, and at the same time pay a part of the debt he owed them, although in the dark he could not distinguish one from another.

But they recognized him easily enough, and were not slow with their opinions regarding him.

"Get in there, you rascals, get in!" he yelled, as he slashed at them with his whip.

"Go shoot yourself!"

"You're an old hog!"

"Better go and see old Slam again and get another dose of ink!"

"Get in, or I'll teach you to disobey the rules!"

He knew they were not in when he stationed himself at the door, but he did not know what they had been up to all the while.

But before he got through with the fun he was having with the boys, they began to have some fun with him, for three or four of them, Tommy among the others, went up one flight of stairs nearly over where he stood, and picking up each a pail of water that was always standing in the hallway in case of fire, they went to the window and gave him the contents in such a sudden and copious shower that it knocked him off his feet and landed him on the ground.

Three or four more buckets reached him as he lay there, and then an exultant shout rang through the building which Hop Ski heard and wondered at.

But Janitor Lamb didn't wonder at it at all. His only wonder was how he had escaped without having his neck broken, and who the fellows were who soured him.

However, he didn't remain there long to indulge in his speculations, for he didn't know but that the indignant boys might be planning something else in the darkness for his benefit, and so he dusted out, or, rather, "muddied" out, and sought his own quarters.

The ducking gave him a nice dose of the rheumatism to boot, so that he really had all the fun he wanted out of the affair, while the boys laughed themselves to sleep.

The next morning bright and early, however, he was up as usual, and went about the place to see if everything was all right.

The first thing he saw was Hop Ski suspended by the rope in the air.

At first he could not believe his senses. What the dickens was the Chinaman doing up there?

He approached him cautiously.

"Is that you, Ski?" he asked, but of course the Chinaman could make no reply. All he could do was to kick and grunt.

This again frightened the janitor so that he was on the point of turning and running back to the house to alarm Mr. Slam. But plucking up a little courage, he returned.

Then he saw how it was, and suspected that the boys who had been caught out by him the night before had played this trick on the Chinaman, and so he proceeded to unfasten the rope and lower him to the ground, after which he unbound him and removed the gag.

Hop Ski was nearly played out, and even after his rice-eater was unbound he could scarcely find his tongue to speak.

"What is the meaning of this?"

Hop tried to wag his jaws, but couldn't.

"How came you up there?" he asked again.

"Me don't no!" he jerked out, and it was quite evident that his mad was returning with his power of articulation.

"Can't you explain? You certainly did not bind and gag yourself and get up there."

"No. Bloys," said Hop.

"The boys?"

"Cussie ebybody—yes, bloys!"

"When did they do it—last night?"

"So be. Glab me; tie lup mouth an' han'. Plump water lon me; chuckee sloft sloap in eye, in snoot, in mouth; slam-bang debil lout me, len tie lup hea, so be!"

"What did they do it for?"

"Flor flun, guess," said he, sorrowfully.

Elam Lamb was mad himself at the result of his own little sport with the boys, but he couldn't help laughing at Hop Ski.

"Velly funny, hey?" he asked, savagely.

"But I don't understand it."

"Me yes."

"How is it, then?"

"Bloys find lout I cutee swing."

"Oh, they did, hey?" asked Lamb, quickly.

"So be."

"How could they have found it out?"

"Gib lup. Velly smart, so be."

"And so they took this way to get square. I'll tell you what, that devilish Tommy Bounce is too smart, and we have got to

look sharp for him. Don't mind this, and we'll kill the little cuss yet."

"Me knockie stuffin lout," replied Hop Ski, doubling up his fist and looking savage.

"Yes, but keep quiet for a while, and we will give them all a dose," said Elam, confidently.

"Allie yitee," he muttered, walking stiffly away.

In spite of his being mad himself, Elam could not keep from laughing at the misfortunes and indignation of poor Hop Ski, but he now felt certain that he had an ally on whom he could depend in his war with Mr. Slam's pupils.

Hop kept out of sight for the next few days, and not knowing how he ever got down from his lofty perch, they could only conjecture and laugh over the probabilities of the case.

But they knew all about Elam, and missed no opportunity of giving him the grand laugh whenever they chanced to meet him.

This of course only widened the gulf between them, but the boys were ready for anything with him, and rather encouraged his animosity than otherwise.

But it was necessary to the fun of the situation that at least one of the boys should enjoy the confidence of Elam Lamb, and as he had always manifested some considerable friendship for Tim Kane, it was concluded to use him.

Tim was a smart little fellow, and through him they managed to keep posted, as Elam, who fell into the trap, thought he found out many things about the boys, but didn't.

Now it so happened that he was desperately in love with the cook, a big buxom Irish girl, but who had another lover, one of her own countrymen, a regular broth of a boy.

His name was Teddy McGee, and he came to see his Ellen every Sunday night, and courted her in the kitchen.

Elam found it out and took it upon himself to order Teddy never to visit the house again, telling him that courting was not permitted on the premises under any circumstances, thinking that if he could only bluff Teddy out of visiting the handsome cook, that he himself would have no trouble in walking into her affections.

But Teddy and Ellen met on the sly after that, and of course she learned all about the affair, which caused her to hate Elam worse than ever before, and which, by the by, brought her nearly up to the clawing point.

Tommy Bounce was not long in finding out all this, and so he let a few of the boys into the secret of a little job he had worked out and put up for the benefit of their common enemy.

Tim Kane was kept busy, and by following Tommy's instructions, he had roused up the hopes of Elam Lamb regarding the cook until he wore a perpetual grin.

Tim told him that he never saw her but that she was inquiring for him, and would send her love to him on the sly.

"Did she seem pleased, Tim?" he asked one day.

"Pleased! Well, I should say so. And guess what she asked me?"

"I'm sure I don't know. What was it?"

"She asked me if I thought you would object to meeting her out in the arbor some night for a pleasant chat?"

"Why, Tim—did she really say that?" asked Elam, with great earnestness.

"Sure, and I told her I thought you would be delighted," replied the little rascal.

"Good! Now, Tim, here's a quarter for pocket money. See her this afternoon, and tell her that I'll wait for her in the arbor to-night at nine o'clock."

"All right."

"And be sure that you don't drop a word of it to any of the boys."

"Oh, of course not."

"Remember, now, nine o'clock."

"All right. I'll see her this afternoon."

But he didn't do anything of the kind. He saw the leader, Tommy Bounce, and told him how far the racket had progressed, at the same time receiving further instructions.

A little while after supper Tommy worked his way into the kitchen where Ellen was at work.

"Halloo, Ellen," said he, briskly.

"Is that yerself, Tommy?"

"It is. Whist!" said he, mysteriously.

"What is it, Tommy?"

"I'm just from the village."

"Ye are?"

"Yes; and I saw Teddy."

"Did ye now? How is he?"

"Fine as silk."

"Troth, I'll warrant me he is. What did he say—did he speake of me?"

"He did. Whist! He's coming to see you to-night."

"Is he? But how about ould Lamb?"

"He's going to steal in, and wants to meet you in the arbor at nine o'clock."

"Is that so? Well, Tommy, that's good of ye ter bring me word. I'll be there. But hould yer whist, or ould Lamb 'll find it out."

"No, he'll be in bed by that time."

"I hope so, the ould sheep. Here's a big piece of cake for ye, Tommy. Whist, now."

"Oh, I'll be mum as an oyster. Good-by," and taking the generous hunk of cake, enough to have driven Mr. Slam mad had he seen it in the possession of any one pupil, he made his way back to the dormitory, where he shared it with his chums.

Then the job was all put up, and a few minutes before nine o'clock that night about a dozen of them stole softly through the garden and hid in the shrubbery just back of the arbor.

They had got only comfortably settled when they saw old Elam stealing softly along one of the garden paths and enter the arbor.

It seemed a long time to the boys, as it most likely did to Elam, before Ellen put in an appearance. But they finally saw her coming up the path leading from the kitchen, and knew that the fun was about to commence. They held their breaths as they saw her enter the dark arbor, and each one of them had his handkerchief ready to stuff into his mouth in case there was any danger of explosion. Elam being there before her, was of course used to the darkness, and saw her before she saw him. He rushed forward and caught her in his arms, at the same time whispering:

"Darling Nellie!"

"Whist! Is it you, Teddy?" she asked.

"No—no, it is me," whispered Elam.

"Me! Who's me?" she asked, starting back.

"Why, Elam Lamb, your lover."

"Elam nothing! Lave go of me!"

"But, Nellie——"

"Lave go of me, I say, or I'll bust ye in the snoot, so I will!" she cried, indignantly.

"But hear me, Nellie. You——"

She didn't wait for any more blarney or for further explanation, but, releasing one of her powerful arms, she drew off and pasted him in the eye with her big fist, knocking him sprawling, and then she appeared not to be satisfied, for she gave him one or two more while he was down.

"Take that—an' that, bai manners ter ye, an' if ye ever cross my path agin I'll give ye as much more as yer hungry for," saying which she started for the house, fully believing that Elam had somehow discovered the intended meeting between her and Teddy, and had come to break it up.

Poor Elam! He regained his senses just in time to hear a laughing shout of tickled boys, who thereupon scattered through the garden and disappeared. He staggered about in the darkness for a moment, and finally reached the open air.

CHAPTER X.

Elam Lamb had a dim idea that a job had been put up on him, and another idea, that was not so dim, that he had re-

ceived a good pounding at the hands of the cook, whom he had attempted to make love to in the arbor. By the aid of the candle and the mirror he was enabled to see as fine a pair of black eyes as ever adorned a man's mug, together with a nose so swollen and red that it looked like a boiled beet more than anything else.

"Confound my luck! Confound those boys! Confound everybody!" he groaned. "I think Tommy Bounce is at the bottom of this, hang me if I don't! But what a muscle she has got! Gracious! Guess I don't want to make love to her any more right away. Wonder what made her act so? Oh, come to think of it, it was a job that Tommy Bounce or some of those young rascals put up with her. But, oh, I know who'll get the devil for this," and he sopped a wet towel into first one eye socket and then the other. It was quite late before he got to bed, and even then it was a long time before he could get to sleep. And yet, after he succeeded in doing so, he was in utter torment, for he dreamed the whole affair over again, and the lusty Irish girl had him down and was plugging him with her big shoes. And the next morning she lost no time in going to Prof. Slam with her trouble.

"Cud I speake wid ye, sur?" she asked.

"Yes; what is the trouble?" he asked, kindly.

"Alum Lamb, sur."

"What?"

"Ther janitor."

"Oh, Elam Lamb.~ Well, what of him?"

"I licked the tar out o' him last noight."

"You did what?" asked the old man.

"I slugged the baste, so I did."

"But, I don't understand you, Ellen."

"Wal, sur, it war loike this. Sure, an' I expected me young man, Teddy, to see me in the arbor beyant."

"Oh, that was very wrong, Ellen; you should never meet a young man in a dark arbor."

"Sure, he sent me worrud that he'd be there, an' I went for ter mate him, when who the devil shud I foind there but that blackguard, Alum Lamb, the ould goat."

"Well?"

"An' fut did he do but begin for ter make love ter me."

"Oh, he did, eh? Are you sure?"

"Am I? Bad luck ter him, didn't he put his arms around me middle here an' try ter kiss me? He did, and it's true for me."

"Dreadful!" exclaimed Mr. Slam.

"An' it's a dreadful b'atin' I gave him."

"Served him right, Ellen, served him right."

"Thank ye, sur. That's fut brung me ter yer room, sur, for fear he'd get here ahead of me, an' give me a bad character, sur."

"I am glad you came. But return now to your duties and I will see that he does not molest you again," said Slam.

"All roight, sur," said she; and back she went to her own domains.

"Dreadful, dreadful, dreadful!" mused Prof. Slam. "To think that a steady old fellow like Elam Lamb should be caught in such business. I'll have to examine him."

Meanwhile Elam was attending to his duties, but keeping very shady, especially about the eyes, but it was not long before he came plump upon the old professor.

"What, Mr. Lamb—what is the matter with your face—what is the meaning of those eclipsed organs?" he asked, pointing to his eyes.

"Oh, the mule and I had a little difficulty, that's all," said Elam, sheepfacedly.

"It is very strange; I never knew before that a mule could kick so straightly for the eyes."

"Oh, that often occurs, sir."

"But cooks sometimes kick, don't they?"

"Well, really, I cannot say that," said Elam, blushing deeply.

"Mr. Lamb, if you wish to retain your position in this

school, you must be more careful," said the old man, walking away.

"What does he mean, I wonder?" mused Elam. "I wonder if anybody has given it away so soon?"

But he had a good opportunity before long to learn whether the thing was known or not among the boys, for when they turned out to breakfast and happened to spy him, they yelled:

"Come to my arms, Nellie darling!" shouted one.

"I'm your lover, Nellie!"

"Give me a kiss, darling!"

"That's all right, Nellie!" and a dozen other calls greeted his ear, showing that they knew all about it.

It made him feel sick and lonely, for now he thought that he hadn't a friend in the world, not even Hop Ski, and he got out of sight as quickly as possible.

The affair proved a source of much amusement for the school, and Elam, feeling himself under a cloud, made it a point to keep as much out of the way as possible, hoping the thing would blow over.

But the thing did not blow over, or wear out half so fast as he hoped it would, and he received unpleasant reminders of it every now and then, either from the boys or from Ellen herself, when the boys set her up to it, and this of course kept up the warfare between them.

In the meantime, however, they had revived the old football, or rather, they brought it from its old hiding-place, and frequently had fun with it, but taking good care not to do so very near to Mr. Slam's study.

But Elam could not bear to see the boys enjoying themselves, and so he watched until he found where they kept the ball hidden, and then he cut it all to pieces, putting an end to that sport, for in those days it was no easy job to get a football.

Of course Tommy and his friends took particular pains to get square for it, and one of the little jobs they put up on him was after this fashion.

They discovered that the old rooster was a great hand to pop corn in his room evenings, and all the next day he would go around with a quart or two of it in his coat pocket, every now and then throwing a few kernels into his huge mouth as he went about the place.

Observing this, Tommy procured some little pellets of fulminating powder, about the size of the pop-corn kernels, and one day while the chambermaid was making up his room, he stole in behind her and placed his preparation into the dish of unpopped corn that stood near by.

That night the boys lingered around in the vicinity of Elam's ground-floor room to see if there would be any fun.

Elam retired soon after supper, and after his chores were done, and finding a good fire burning in his stove, his favorite amusement at once suggested itself.

So he took down his corn-popper and placed a handful of the corn in it. Then he sat down and straddled the stove with his long legs, and began to shake the popper over the fire.

He finally popped that lot without anything happening to disturb his peaceful meditations, and then he filled it up again and began to shake.

One or two kernels got mad and humped themselves inside out, when a pill of the fulminating powder got rather too warm for comfort, and then there was an explosion which tore his corn-popper all to pieces, scattering the corn and everything else, putting out the light and frightening the old fellow half to death.

"Murder—murder!" he yelled. "I've been shot!" and supposing that robbers were in the room, he dropped upon his knees and crawled under the bed.

Here he listened anxiously for the next five minutes, but hearing no one moving (although it was funny that he did not hear the boys laughing outside), he crawled cautiously out and procured a match.

The scene that the light presented was more than he could

account for. Corn, pieces of the popper, coals of fire—in short, everything was scattered strangely about the room.

"Wonder what it was?" he muttered, as he surveyed the wreck. "Must be the corn all popped at once. Good gracious, how it frightened me!" he added.

This, however, put an end to the business that night, and the next day he told the professor all about it; how a whole popper full of corn had exploded at the same instant, and what the result had been.

"Very strange things happen to you, Mr. Lamb," growled the old man; "and if there was any liquor about the place I could account for them. The idea of such a thing," he sneeringly added.

"But I assure you——"

"Oh, go about your business!" and turning away, he left him alone.

"Now I wonder if that old ass thinks I don't know what I am talking about?" he muttered; and then went about the duties of the day.

But he was out of popped corn, and wasn't happy all day; sort of lost, so to speak, for something for his mill to grind on. Not having any popper, he borrowed a spider from the kitchen that evening, and began popping corn in that; but the first attempt was more disastrous than the last one had been, for this time the explosion was doubled, and besides putting out the lamp, it put out several panes of glass in the window, broke the spider into a dozen pieces, and alarmed everybody about the place.

And of course everybody, including the boys, rushed to see what the trouble was, and after procuring a light, they found Elam perched up on the top of his old bureau all covered with soot, his hair full of pop-corn and cinders, and the most demoralized specimen of humanity that was ever seen.

"What is the matter?" asked the professor.

"I—I don't know," replied Elam, trembling and looking wildly from one to another. "I—I was popping corn, and——"

"They all went off together again, I suppose. Well, here's a nice bill for you to pay. But I won't have my place endangered by any more of your nonsense. If I know of your popping any more corn, you'll get popped out of your situation," replied Slam, at which the boys roared and cheered heartily.

Poor Elam! He couldn't tell for the life of him what it meant, but after Slam went away he began to pick things up and to throw other things at his tormentors, who stood around guying him unmercifully.

"Guess it must have been our football that exploded," suggested Tommy Bounce, and then they all laughed and shouted some more, though finally leaving him alone in his misery.

But he took a grand and lofty tumble all to himself. It was some sort of a job that the boys had fixed up on him, although exactly what it was he could not tell.

Well, the next fun of any particular character happened on the Fourth of July.

The professor had calculated on having a great time. There was going to be a grand celebration in the village, and he informed the boys that they were all to march there in a body and join the procession in honor of the day.

Well, perhaps they did not regard this as a picnic.

Oh, no!

Only a few of them had gone home to spend the day, for, if the truth must be told, the parents of the majority of those boys regarded it as much the best thing that could be done to keep them away from home as much as possible.

Tommy Bounce was one of that kind, of course.

But he could stand it.

Altogether there were about seventy-five of them who were doomed to spend their Fourth at school, and in most cases because Professor Slam had rendered such a bad report to their parents of the boys, just because they wanted a little fun.

There was one consolation, however, and that was a month's

vacation after the Fourth, they all looked forward to it with great pleasure.

But they were in for the celebration, and they were also in for the procession.

The professor was to be one of the orators of the day, and the honor thus heaped upon him made him swell up like a toad in a shower.

But the boys had to be drilled in marching in order to make a good appearance in the procession, and to Elam Lamb, who claimed to have been a soldier once, was assigned the task of drilling them.

And didn't he have a nice time of it!

Well, somewhat.

As he probably remembers to this day.

The play ground was of course the place chosen for the drill, and three times per day did he take them out and attempt to put them through, while the professor was rehearsing his speech alone in his study, and making up fine wordy effects.

But that marching! It was comical enough for a ragamuffin parade, and Elam lost his temper so many times that it was a wonder that he ever found it again.

And yet on the evening of the third they all did so well that he felt certain that they would make a fine appearance in the procession, and reflect great credit upon the school and its tutors.

Mr. Slam was greatly interested, and on that occasion, after they had satisfied Elam with their marching, he came forth to address them.

The boys in the meantime had received each a quantity of fireworks from their parents, who wanted them to have a good time—anywhere but at home—and they were feeling first rate over the prospect, to say nothing of the little jobs they had arranged for a proper celebration of the glorious day.

"Young men, my pupils," began Slam, in addressing them, "we are standing on the verge of a great national occasion."

Here the boys, led by Tommy, put in some rousing cheers.

"To-morrow's sun will usher in the great and ever glorious Fourth of July, the day, as you know, when our forefathers put their hands and seals to that glorious document known as the Declaration of Independence, which made this land free and independent."

More cheers, in which Elam took part, but was snubbed short by a big fire-cracker, which somehow exploded right under his coat tail, causing him to leap upward and spin around in the air like a pinwheel for a moment, and then to land on his back completely bewildered. But so wrought up had he become by the professor's fiery eloquence that he thought it only a marked passage in his speech, and so tried to look sober.

"Young gentlemen, happy young Americans! I expect you to do honor to your school to-morrow."

"We will—we will!" they cried.

"But I must inform you that in order to do so, you must observe discipline. Follow the instructions you have received and there will be no doubt about it."

"We will—we will!"

This enthusiasm so pleased the old man that he proceeded to deliver the speech he had laid out to deliver the next day, during which the boys set off fireworks to punctuate it.

Well, all things considered, it was a great day for Professor Slam's school, and after they had allowed him to work off that speech, he was good-natured enough to let them do almost anything they wanted to in order to manifest their patriotism and natural enthusiasm.

Well, the evening of the third went off with a regular zip and a hurrah, and late at night, after having bushels of fun, the boys paid their good-night respects to Hop Ski, the boss of the laundry.

He had gone to bed, but that was nothing, and amid a perfect shower of crackers, torpedoes and Roman candles, they

brought him out upon the green and made him dance a breakdown in his shirt-tail in honor of Yankee Doodle.

"Shootie Lankee Dooly!" he said, after the boys had enjoyed an hour's fun with him. "Me likee fire-crackers, but me no likee Lankee Dooly! Who Lankee Dooly, anyway?" he mused, after the boys had allowed him to retire.

Well, all the boys went to sleep late, after playing any number of tricks on each other, and glad was both Elam and Hop Ski when the jollification was over.

The next morning they awoke bright and early, however, and fell to putting fire to the crackers which had been sent them.

But Tommy Bounce was looking further ahead than this, and as he sauntered out into the grounds surrounding the school, he saw the Sunday-go-to-meeting-clothes of the professor and Elam Lamb hanging upon the clothes line to take the wrinkles out and have them fresh for the great and glorious occasion.

Tommy quickly consulted with some of his chums in mischief, and in less than ten minutes the programme was made up.

Tommy watched his chance, and after a little maneuvering, he managed to place a package of double fire-crackers in the hind pocket of both of the coats, leaving the end of the large fuse sticking out just a trifle.

At nine o'clock, Elam Lamb, as marshal of the school, got the boys together preparatory to getting them into a line in order to march them to the village.

He had his long black coat on, as did the professor, having taken them from the line without a suspicion that anything was wrong, and both of them were ready for the honors.

Between the professor and Elam Lamb it had been arranged that Elam should walk in front by the side of the professor, carrying an American flag, while a banner was to be carried by one of the boys in the rear, with the name of the school upon it.

And so they got into line and started.

The professor in the meantime had made up his mind what boys should march next to him, and of course he selected the worst ones, so that he could have them directly under his eye.

On the strength of that, Tommy Bounce was in the front rank and no mistake. But the way things had been arranged, it would have made no difference which ones were to the front.

They had no music, and would have none until they reached the village, but Elam had trained them so nicely that they could march to the time of "Hay-foot—straw-foot" first rate.

Finally they reached the village, where all was enthusiasm and excitement. The professor was received with many honors, and assigned a place in the procession. All the while he was swelling with the great speech he was to deliver, and left the boys to the charge of Elam Lamb. He didn't wish to be bothered with them, for his mind was so full of his great speech.

It was a great day for the village. All the associations, from the Bait Grabbers to the Young Men's Christian Association, were in the procession, which now began to move.

It was also a great day for the boys, and so enthusiastic were they that they joined in the movement and helped to swell the procession.

Tommy Bounce, however, was on the lookout, and with a lighted punk between his fingers, he was waiting a good opportunity.

Professor Slam and Elam were full of patriotism and first-class enthusiasm, and as they marched just ahead of the scholars, it was a sight to behold. A hen and rooster, with their chickens, could not have produced a greater sensation than they did.

The boy who was carrying the banner behind was doing his duty, and citizens applauded the great academy of learning.

But just while enthusiasm was at its highest, while the procession was doing its best, Tommy Bounce with his lighted punk set fire to the fuse which protruded from both their

leaders' pockets, and in less than ten seconds there was the liveliest cracking and banging in those two coat-tail pockets that was ever heard on land or sea.

"Murder—murder—murder!" yelled Elam.

"Mercy on us! I—I—oh!" put in the professor, as the crackers began to explode.

"Oh—oh—oh!" yelled Elam, as he whirled and whirled around, all the while trying to put out the excitement in his coat tails.

A hundred hands were forthcoming to put a stop to the raging catastrophe, but it was not until nearly every stitch of clothing had been blown from their bodies, that they were rescued and carried out beneath the village pump, when the fire was extinguished, as also the eloquence of Professor Slam.

CHAPTER XI.

That fire-cracker racket put an end to all further ideas of decorum, and both Professor Slam and Elam Lamb were completely exhausted when they got through with their gymnastics of trying to put themselves out.

As for the Fourth of July speech which Slam was expected to deliver, it never was born, and some other man delivered his own, being a candidate for political honors, and as it was big, smooth, and long, all thoughts regarding Professor Slam were lost beyond redemption. And as for Elam Lamb, he was wandering around wildly in search of clothing to cover his nakedness.

It was a great Fourth of July, and although Tommy Bounce was the real hero, neither Slam nor Lamb knew what had happened to them, further than that there had been a great "celebration" in the rear.

And that great speech was lost to the world, for how could a man deliver an oration with his coat all torn to pieces, and the seat of his unmentionables ripped away?

The boys kept on in the procession just as though nothing had happened, and their splendid marching evoked much applause, for Tommy had caught up the flag and was bearing it along with all the soberness of a drum major.

The affair created a great deal of excitement, and nearly broke up the procession. In fact, it probably would have done so had it not been for Tommy and a few others.

Rumor flew from mouth to mouth, and before long it was whispered around that the professor had been blown to atoms by the explosion of a fifty-pound shell, which he was carrying in his coat pocket; that several others had shared his fate; and that people were around with baskets gathering up their mortal remains, which were strewn all over the village. One man even went so far as to assert positively that a human arm had fallen in his front yard, situated at least a mile from the scene of the explosion.

But these rumors were short-lived, and failed to burst up the celebration, which kept working itself up, while Slam and Lamb were being taken to the village hotel.

And much they both needed care.

The clothes were nearly torn from their bodies, and certain portions of those bodies, usually covered with coat-tails, were burned quite sore, and were very much alive with tingling.

Their friends at once gave them both a big horn of brandy to keep their nerves quiet, and, after repeating the dose three or four times, they forgot that they ever had any such thing as nerves.

But, in the absence of clothes, all idea of joining either in the procession or taking part in the celebration was not to be thought of, and so the first object was to procure something which they could wear to enable them to make their way home again.

Finally the landlord managed to scare up a couple of old

hats and coats, so bad that tramps had often turned up their snoots at them, and as there was no other alternative they put them on.

And didn't they look comical!

But in the meantime they had got so much liquor in to mend their nerves that they both felt like celebrating any way, and finally they wandered away from the hotel arm in arm, full as goats and happy as lords.

They didn't find the celebration, however, but they found more liquor, and in less than two hours after the mishap they were both exceedingly jubilant, and were wandering about the village aimlessly.

"Misser Ram, this is an outrage," said Slam, balancing himself on the arm of Janitor Lamb.

"Darn outrage—hic! What was it, anyhow?" asked Lamb.

"Damfino. Guess all the fireworks went off at once—like your corn, eh, ole man?" and he dug him in the ribs with his elbow, laughing loudly at the same time.

"I guess it was the deviltry of Tommy Bounce and the other boys," suggested Elam.

"Think sho?"

"What else could it be?"

"Give her up. Where be the boys?"

"They continued right on with the procession, just as though nothing had happened."

"Good boys! Got lots nerve. Bound to keep up the honor of the school."

"Bound to raise the devil, more like."

"You will skin 'em," said he, coming to an unsteady halt. "Skin every mugger's son of 'em, eh, Mr. Pealem Ram?"

"Elam Lamb, sir!"

"Well, Reelam Jam; all er same. We'll skin 'em."

"They deserve it, sir."

"Course they do. You skin half of 'em, an' I'll skin ozzer half—hic!"

"To think of my best clothes all torn to pieces," moaned Elam.

"Tink mine, too. An' my speech all gone. Wonder wasser'll do wizout my oration? Hold on, Peelam, I'm goin' to deliver yat 'ration, anyhow," said he, tearing himself away and striking a very unsteady oratorical attitude.

"All right, go 'head."

"Feller shipizens, I rise in response to ye glorious—glorious toast: 'Ye day we shelebrate!' " he began, and before he had proceeded with many sentences there was a crowd around him.

Of course it was not the big crowd, for that was at the tent down on the green, where the celebration was taking place; but it was made up of mischievous boys, who were out on their own hooks and ready to pick up anything in the shape of fun.

And these two drunken comicals were about as good a show for fun as anything they had yet encountered, and they at once went in to work them, while the professor went on with his speech, and Elam did the heavy applause, assisted, however, by the boys.

They threw firecrackers at them; they cheered and guyed them; they plugged them with everything they could lay hands on, although the professor could not be choked off of his oration until some of them got a long stick between his legs and managed to trip him up.

This, of course, produced a tremendous hurrah, and what little there was left of the oration was knocked completely out of the orator, who lay sprawling in the dirt.

Elam rushed to the old man's rescue, and raised two or three of those mischievous little rascals on the toes of his big boot, landing them a rod or so away, and frightening the others so that he was enabled to get the professor upon his pins again.

"Let's go," he suggested.

"Yes, oration's all done," said Slam, pulling his old muddy hat down over his head.

"Well, I should say so."

"Great effect, Mr. Rum—made great hit."

"I guess it did," and Elam laughed when he thought about it.

"Audience fairly lifted me on their shoulders," added Slam, as he walked and limped away.

The boys followed at a respectful distance, for the fear of Elam's big boots made them desirous of keeping out of reach. But they still followed, and pelted them with whatever they could pick up, all the while shouting their sentiments at them.

However, they finally reached the hotel, where they were safe, and where they again partook of drinks and did funny business.

Meantime his scholars had got through with all they proposed to do, and as there was a steamboat excursion going up the river, they all joined in that, and went off on a regular hurrah, leaving their victims, of whose antics they knew nothing, to do the same.

But let us return to the school.

Hop Ski and the cook were joint bosses during the absence of the professor and Elam, and they went in for some of the good times themselves. Ellen got a pint of whisky, and was soon whooping drunk, dancing the loudest kind of breakdowns in the kitchen, while Hop Ski was firing crackers and going through all sorts of Chinese motions with his arms, although he hadn't the slightest idea what the day was or why it was celebrated.

"Who Flor Yuli be, anyway?" he finally asked of the happy cook.

"Git out, ye haythin! Sure, it's Fourth of July, ov course," said she indignantly.

"Who be?"

"Oh, go ter the devil an' foind out. Sure, it's ther day we thrashed ther bloody red-coats, so it is. Whoop! Horray for Ireland! Bring on yer red-coats!" she yelled, smacking her big red fists together.

It was fortunate for the housekeeper that she was absent, for, being an Englishwoman, the cook would have gone for her.

But it was all Greek to Hop Ski, and yet, knowing it to be a holiday of some kind, he let off another firecracker and went through some more queer gymnastics. And that was how things were at home.

Hop Ski, however, did not get drunk, for the last instructions he had received from the professor were to keep perfectly straight, and have an eye about the place, so that no tramps should break in and steal.

So he was vigilant, and had loaded up an old musket, but not being able to find any shot, he had put in a handful of rock salt instead, and while he was celebrating something or other, that gun stood close at hand for any emergency.

About three o'clock in the afternoon, Professor Slam and his janitor, both as full as ticks, and both looking like the dickens, concluded that they had celebrated enough, and so arm in arm, they began to reel their way homeward, all the time talking in a very confused way regarding what had happened to them during the day, although by this time they didn't know whether it was Fourth of July or Christmas, or whether they had been up in a balloon or been kicked by a mule.

"Whoop!" yelled Slam.

"Yip!" squealed Lamb.

"'Rah for Christmas!"

"Yip for Shanksgivin'!"

"Sree cheers for everybody!"

"Yip for you 'n I 'n us!"

"Shet 'em up again, ramrod; we don't care a ram! Shet 'em up! Brandy's mine. What'll yer have, Yelam?"

"So'll I."

"Ramrod, shet 'em up!" roared Slam, although they were a mile away from the village, and within the same distance of home.

They clung to each other, for they recognized the fact that union is strength, but it was all they could do to keep upon their pins; in fact, they had tumbled down and rolled over in the dust two or three times already.

"Ramrod!" Slam kept yelling, thinking evidently of the landlord, who had given him the liquor.

"Oh, we won't go home till morning—"

"We won't go home for a month—hic!"

"We won't go home till morning!" Elam persisted in saying, evidently thinking he could sing.

"We won't go home for two years!"

"We won't go home till morning!"

"Shut up, Relam. We won't never go home. Relam, you're an ass, you think you can sing. You can't sing for clams, you can't, ole Relam Ram."

"I can sing better 'n you can—hic!"

"You don't know a note from a clay pipe. Fac is, Relam, you're dum fool, you're drunker 'n a bile rowl—hic! Ramrod, shet 'em up some more. What 'n thunder d've care! New Year's only comes once a month. Shet 'em up again—whoop!"

"We won't go home till morning!" put in Elam again, evidently not hearing his own unmelodious voice, or being so drunk that he mistook it for singing.

"Dry up. We won't go home at all. We aren't got any home, anyway."

"Till daylight doth appear!"

"Now, Relam, if you don't shut up, you 'n I'll get mad. Halloo, ramrod! give us nuzzer drink!" and attempting to brace up to an imaginary landlord, he got his feet mixed up with Elam's, somehow, and down they went into the dusty road, where they rolled, whooped, fought, and struggled for the next five minutes before they could get up again.

"Yat's it, didn't I tell you sho? You're drunker 'n dried owl," growled the professor, as he balanced himself on his pins, and tried to recover his old hat.

"So be I—hic!" replied Elam, and then he attempted to finish his song.

"I'm 'shamed of you, Balam," said Slam, finally recovering his hat and crowding it on his head, 'hind side before.

But Elam was bound to finish the song of "We won't go home till morning," if he never got home, and so he paid no attention to the professor, who again got his arm locked into his as they walked along.

And it was in this manner that they got nearly home; in fact, got within sight of the school, when Hop Ski discovered them.

He saw at once that they were drunk, but thought they were tramps and would not attempt any depredation on the place, so he drew an astonished look over his yellow mug and proceeded to watch them as they slowly made their way toward the gate.

"Flor Yuli come, drunkee likee everyshing," he mused, as he watched the queer pair.

"Won't go home till morning," put in Elam, for about the fiftieth time, and finally, as they drew nearer, the old professor joined in himself, showing that it was an understood thing between them that they were not to go home until the early dawn of the following day—in their minds.

Hop Ski saw them approaching nearer and nearer, and he began to get excited, not knowing who they were.

"Go 'way, dlunkie flool, go 'way!" he yelled, but of course they did not hear him.

"Won't go home till morning!"

"Go 'way, me flire gun!"

"Won't go home till morning—for my heart is true ter Poll, my heart is true ter Poll," they yelled.

"Me knockie Plol all lout, me shoot," yelled Hop Ski, seizing the gun, hoping to frighten them.

But he might as well have tried to frighten a mowing machine as to have awakened them to a sense of any danger, and seeing them approach nearer and nearer to the gate, he began to regard them as robbers, and made up his mind to pepper them with salt.

Taking aim, he blazed away, dividing a handful of salt between them.

And each one of them got all he wanted, and such a whooping, yelling and scrambling around where they had fallen, was enough to frighten the devil.

At all events it frightened Hop Ski, for thinking he had killed them, he threw away the gun and ran as though a policeman was after him.

There was no mistake about him—the salt had been sent where it would do the most good, for both of the drunkards were well peppered with it, and it half sobered them almost instantly.

"Wa—wa—wa—I'm shot!" yelled Slam, rubbing in first one place and then another, and right vigorously.

"I'm dead! murdered! killed!" moaned Elam, and then he howled with pain.

"Murder! thieves! highwaymen!"

"Help—help—help!" and then they looked solemnly and inquiringly at each other.

By this time the cook, Ellen, had become aware of trouble, and she rushed out to see if there was a chance for a fight.

Drunk as she was, she recognized the professor and Elam.

"Fut the mischief's the matther here?" she asked, approaching them.

"We've been murdered!" groaned Professor Slam.

"Highwayed!" added Elam, who was doing some lofty scratching and rubbing on account of the salt that had been sent into his drunken skin.

"Faix, I shud say so. How came ye this way?" she asked in astonishment.

"Halloo, Ellen! Zat you?" asked Slam, after gazing at her a moment.

"Troth is this yees, professor?"

"No. I—I—Ellen, take me in."

"Begob, I shud say ye'd already been taken in. I scarcely knew ye."

"Ellen—hic—I scarcely know myself. But I've been shot. Go for a doctor. Stop, take me to my room first."

She took his arm and then turned to Elam, who was rubbing and moaning.

"Bad luck ter yer, Mr. Eelram, but I think this is yer doin's, an' I've a moind ter give yer a batin' so I have."

"Oh, you shut up!" replied Elam.

"Will I? I'll soon shut ye up," and springing from the professor to him, she put in about a dozen licks in the liveliest time that was ever made, sending him to grass and causing him to bellow like a calf, and to yell "Murder!" louder than ever.

"There, bad luck ter ye! How d'yer loike that?" said she, turning again to the half-paralyzed professor, and leading him to his room, where she left him tumbled upon a bed, fully believing that he was shot to death.

Returning, she dispatched Hop Ski for a doctor, and he went lively, fully believing that he had killed them, but all the while wondering what the Fourth of July had to do with such a racket.

Then the cook returned to find Elam, for the purpose of giving him some more fun, but he had become sufficiently sobered to know enough to get under the cover of his own room.

Of course Hop Ski explained the whole matter to the doctor, and after picking out the salt, he left the victims to sober off and freshen up at their leisure.

By this time it was nearly dark, and the scholars returned, tired out, but anxious to know what had become of their victims. They had learned all about their racket in the village, and had enjoyed an hour's hearty laugh over it, but how they had managed to get home, if at all, they knew not.

But they soon found Hop Ski, who told them all about it in his broken English.

"Flor Youli alle time, so be," said he. "Ole man lunk likee blazie, Lelam lunk likee owl, cook lunk likee goat, an' me shootee salt an' makee itch likee d——n!" he added to his explanation.

Little by little they worked the story all out of him, and even although they had to go hungry and supperless to bed, they were so full of laughter that they hardly noticed it.

"Flor Youli big!" said Hop Ski.

"You bet!" said they.

"Boys, Hop is right. This has been the greatest Fourth of July that we have ever seen or may see again," said Tommy Bounce. "But how it will all end is another thing. I wonder where they are now?"

"Alle lunk—gone sleepie," said Hop.

"Good! But to-morrow! Well, we must all swear that we know nothing about it; that the explosion was occasioned by somebody in the crowd firing in crackers by the bunch, and that we kept right on and upheld the dignity of the school like brave, good boys."

"Yes—yes," they all agreed.

"Don't givee way me—salt," said Hop.

"Oh, no, that's all right."

And having it all understood, they were glad to get to bed, being very tired after their day's sport and bushels of laughter.

But the next day failed to bring forth either the professor or the janitor, Elam Lamb. So the boys had another holiday.

CHAPTER XII.

Two days elapsed before either Mr. Slam or Elam Lamb put in an appearance, both of them being so completely used up after their Fourth of July experiences that they hardly knew who or what they were or what had happened to them.

One thing, however, they did know, and that was that they had both been shot full of salt by somebody, which somebody was Hop Ski, as the reader knows, although they did not know it.

The term was finished, and a long vacation was soon to follow, so Mr. Slam concluded to send the boys all home, and take the vacation to recuperate himself in, hoping that everything would blow over and be forgotten by the time school commenced again.

As for Elam, he was even sicker than the professor was. Such a racket, and such a series of adventures he had never taken part in before. He rubbed and scratched himself for a week without saying anything beyond all the "cuss words" he knew or could borrow, although he kept up the loudest kind of thinking about the matter.

But before he had rubbed the posts and trees about the place all smooth, the boys were all away on their vacations, and he was left alone with his wounds and his growlings.

Both the cook and Hop Ski kept the secret. She feared to give him away for fear he would tell about her Fourth of July drunk, and so far as he was concerned, he was not particularly anxious to make the truth known.

So Slam and Lamb kept their peace and worried along during the months of vacation, seldom or never referring to the sore matter existing between them, although Elam felt sure that the whole trouble was to be accounted for on the rascality of those mischievous boys, and firmly resolved within himself to have a terrible revenge when they returned to school again.

As for the professor, when he came to think the matter over seriously, and after he had received two or three lectures by his housekeeper, he felt very much ashamed of himself, and refused to go to the village again, where the story of his queer doings on the Fourth was the subject of much scandal and general laughter.

He feared that it would injure the reputation of his school, and so in a quiet way set himself to work to make amends for the past, and to swear off from taking anything to drink that was intoxicating, even in the shape of medicine.

Taking all in all, Hop Ski and Ellen, the cook, had more pleasure during that vacation than did either Elam or Mr. Slam, for they had the old racket to laugh over, while the other two felt all the while more like weeping over it than anything else.

"Heap clussie good!" Hop would mutter to himself, whenever he thought of the affair, or whenever he saw either of the heroes. "Alle slalt likee corn-beef, 'spect. Tee-he-he!"

Well, the matter was well nigh forgotten by the time the term began again, and the boys, who enjoyed themselves so well during the vacation that they had nearly forgotten the racket of the Fourth, had assembled again, brown as berries and fresh as daisies.

But it is safe to say that Elam was not glad to see them, and the professor wore a look that was far from inviting, although he was doubtless glad that the affair had not reached the parents of the boys, since had it done so it was more than probable that they would never have returned to him again in a body, as they went away. So he tried to be pleasant and agreeable, while at the same time wearing an expression which said that he would never stand any more of such nonsense as he had stood before.

Hop Ski, on the other hand, was delighted to see the boys again, for although they had frequently played games on him and made him mad enough to eat them, yet they had afforded him a deal of amusement. So he grinned all over himself, more especially when Tommy Bounce made his appearance.

"Halloo, Hop. How are you?" he asked merrily.

"Bully glood," replied the Chinaman.

"How's everything?"

"Bully glood, so be."

"Much washie—washie?"

"Heap, no. 'Spect now, bloys come."

"How's the old janitor?"

"Glowl—glowl, likie dlog wiv slore head."

"Has he got freshened up yet?"

This caused Hop Ski to laugh as though he would burst, for to him it had always been one of the funniest things in the world, this pickling of Slam and Lamb.

But with the commencement of the fall term came five or six new scholars, one of whom demands more than a passing notice, since he was more than an ordinary fellow, and will most likely figure in this story more or less in the future.

His name was Bill Gunn. He resided in New York, when his parents would let him:

He was about eighteen years of age, and full as tall as a man, although he had not yet "filled out," and was somewhat lathy. But he was gifted with the power of mimicry to such a degree that he could imitate almost everything in the world, both in voice and "make-up," and besides this he was a natural ventriloquist.

He was not what might be called a mischievous fellow—that is to say, not like Tommy Bounce and some of the other fellows, but he would go to almost any extreme to show what he could do, or to practice some new snap.

They say that not one person in a million is a poet, but it is safe to say that not one in five millions is a natural ventriloquist, although the art is not half so difficult as it at first seems, being only a finely trained ear for catching such sounds, and a faculty of reproducing or imitating those sounds and voices in such a way as to make it seem that they are the original ones, which faculty is largely assisted by the powers of imitation and dress.

But of course the old scholars could never allow them to become members of the school without giving them a "hazing," such as Tommy Bounce and others received, and so they were all put through a midnight course of sprouts.

And after this introduction they were all taken into the fold. Bill Gunn speedily became a favorite, and before they had been there a week, he was voted one of the "gang."

They used to congregate in Tommy's room nights after the

lights were supposed to be out, and then he would entertain them with imitations of various sorts, some of which were very clever.

And he had a lot of sleight-of-hand tricks that he had learned, and these he used to astonish his schoolmates with until they began to regard him as something almost unnatural.

At the commencement of the fall term, there was another addition to the school family, in the shape of a colored man, named Josh Horn, a regular Southern coon that Elam had found somehow, and who was willing to work for very low wages, so long as he could get his grub and lodgings, his principal business being a man of all work, a sort of assistant janitor.

Josh was a comical-looking nig, and the moment he made his appearance, the boys came to the conclusion that there was loads of fun to be got out of him, and you bet they let no opportunity pass without experimenting upon him.

The first thing they did was to "haze" him, and this they did so thoroughly that he was frightened out of at least a year's growth, and concluded that the devil had got him sure.

Of course he told Elam about it the next day, and Elam became his friend, thinking he would have a friend in him should he ever take up arms against the boys.

"They are a bad lot, Josh."

"Fo' de Lord, I should say so," replied Josh.

"And what you want to do is to look out for them all the time."

"How dat?"

"Give one or two of them a good flogging the first time you catch them at their deviltry."

"But how if I don't catch 'em, boss?"

"Oh, you can do that without any trouble, if you only keep your eyes peeled. They used to bother me the same way until I walloped some of them. There is that Tommy Bounce. Take him first and give him a good warming, and you will have no further trouble, for he is the ringleader."

Josh scratched his head and mentally concluded that he would think the matter over before he took too much stock in the suggestion, but he finally concluded to keep a bright watch upon the leader of the school, and if possible make him sick at the first opportunity.

But the first loud racket that signalized the commencement of the term was played by Bill Gunn, and it took everybody in most beautifully, you bet.

After watching Professor Slam for a few days, he was enabled to imitate his manner, voice and style of dress to perfection, and he at once set himself to work to get himself up as a shadow of his nibs.

He also learned all about the domestic arrangements of the school, and that the housekeeper, Miss Overripe, was secretly the boss of Professor Slam, making him conform to her views, although he hated her as bad as the devil hates holy water.

It was just after supper one afternoon, about a fortnight after school had commenced, that Bill emerged from his room, made up so artistically that nobody would have suspected that he was not Professor Slam, especially as he had got his voice down to a thread.

Knowing where the boys were congregated, he at once proceeded to Tommy's room and knocked at the door. With a bound somebody opened it, and with a bound that somebody got back behind somebody else, thinking that the professor had caught them at their illegal racket.

"Boys, I have come to you with glad tidings," said he, while they all looked crestfallen.

But instantly the whole tableau of frightened boys was changed, and they all crowded toward him to learn what those glad tidings were like unto.

"Young gentlemen, I have suddenly made up my mind to marry my housekeeper, a lady whom you all respect, I am sure."

"Good!"

"Good for Professor Slam!"

"Good for Miss Overripe!" and other expressions resounded through the room.

"Thank you, my scholars; and in order to make the affair more potent, I invite you all to come to my study and see the marriage ceremony."

"Oh, thank you!"

"Yes—yes, professor, we will come."

"Joy be with you."

"When shall we come?"

"In fifteen minutes, and then we shall get all through before retiring bell rings."

"Of course we will be there, sir," said Tommy, never tumbling to the racket.

"Thanks. Dress yourselves in your best, and come to my study in a body," said he, and then he went away and presently vanished into his own room.

Once here, he speedily took off his disguise and rejoined the boys in his proper person.

Now this was a treat that was not to be sneezed at, and in less than ten minutes they were all dressed in their best and ready to start.

"Now, fellows," said Tommy Bounce, "let us give his nibs a royal send off. Here, let us sing two or three songs over so that we can give them a serenade after the job is done."

"Yes—yes! Try the 'Boat Song' first," and right earnestly did they ring through several songs, showing some remarkably well-trained and natural voices.

It was joke enough, his marrying his old maid housekeeper, without putting up any job to make additional fun, and so they went into the affair with all their hearts, believing that at least one holiday would be given them wherein to celebrate the happy event.

Forming in a line, they started to march for the professor's study, singing a merry song, and when the housekeeper was at that moment engaged in giving Mr. Slam a lecture.

Both of them were startled, of course, by the sudden and unexpected appearance of the whole school in a body, singing and behaving themselves in such a decorous manner.

The professor started forward as if to put a stop to the mob that was filing into his study.

"What's the matter—what is all this?" he demanded savagely.

"Why, we have come to see you married," said Tommy Bounce.

"Married! To whom?" he demanded, in a most excited manner.

"Why, to Miss Overripe, here."

"What! What do you mean?" he exclaimed, while Miss Overripe proceeded to scream, and tried to faint.

"Why, did you not just invite us to see you married to her?" asked Tommy.

"No, sir, never!"

"What, never?"

"No, sir, not by a blank—blank sight! What is the meaning of this?"

The boys looked at each other in amazement.

"Get out of this!"

"Oh—oh—oh!" moaned Miss Overripe.

"But you invited us, sir."

"No, sir, you are a lot of vagabonds! Git out of this or I'll murder some of you. Git out!"

This didn't look much like a wedding, and the boys were greatly puzzled over it.

The old professor, however, was not only puzzled but exasperated.

"What does it mean, sir?" asked Eugene White, one of the really good boys of the school.

"Mean? It is some of your confounded nonsense," replied the professor.

"No, sir; we are all in honest earnestness in this matter, for did you not just invite us yourself?" he asked honestly.

"Invite you?"

"Certainly."

"When?"

"Only a few minutes since."

"Never! You are a set of rascals!" exclaimed the old man; and again did Miss Overripe cry: "Oh—oh—oh!" and make believe that she was going to faint, although if the truth had been known, she would have jumped out of her skin if Slam only would have married her.

"I cannot understand it, sir," said Tommy Bounce, and looking honest.

"Master Bounce, I believe this is one of your rascally affairs, but be assured that your flesh will suffer for it, sir," said the old teacher, with his face as red as a rooster's comb, and at the same time Miss Overripe squealed again, and called upon the professor to protect her.

"You visited us this evening—"

"And I will visit you again if you do not vacate this room instantly!" yelled Slam.

"All right; if there isn't going to be any wedding, why, all right; but we feel awful sorry, but—"

"Git!" and seizing a water pitcher, he hurled it at the group of boys, causing them to scatter like a flock of sheep, and as he did so, Miss Overripe flung herself into his arms, and again insisted upon being "protected."

Really and truly there was no racket in this that any of them knew of, with the exception of Bill Gunn, but he was selfish enough to enjoy it all himself, until the boys had got back again to their quarters.

Then he had a grand laugh at their expense, and explained the whole affair, greatly to their chagrin and amusement.

The next day Mr. Slam attempted to get at the bottom of the mischief, but not a soul would give it away, but on the contrary, they all insisted that the professor had visited them and extended the invitation.

This puzzled the old man greatly, but it worked Miss Overripe up to such a point that she really believed she was engaged to him, and soon after began to hint strongly about his marrying her, at the same time giving him to understand that she had any number of witnesses to swear for her.

This produced trouble for Slam, and he enjoyed it for many a day afterwards; but the boys had bags of fun with this same Bill Gunn, or rather, he made heaps of fun for them.

I could go on and tell you of lots of rackets that Tommy and Bill Gunn and the other boys put up while they were at school, but you must take my word for it, as I have come to the limit.

Tommy proved himself to be a regular chip of the old block, and if Mr. Bounce heard anything about his son's tricks and scrapes, he really had no one to blame for it but himself, for he had been a regular joker when he was a boy, and of course young Bounce got the habit from him.

Perhaps the elder Bounce knew this, and so did not go for Tommy as hard as he might have done when he heard of the boy's rackets, if he did, having been just such a fellow himself and knowing that Tommy could not help it.

Whether he did or not, however, Tommy went right on to the end of the school term having all the fun that was coming to him, and so we will leave him, promising to take him up again soon and relate the further experiences of the chip of the old block.

THE END.

Read the next number (26), entitled, "THE BEST OF THE LOT; OR, GOING HIS FATHER ONE BETTER." By Peter Pad.

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